

CHILDREN'S HISTORY OF ISRAEL

FROM CREATION
to the
PASSING OF MOSES

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CHILDREN'S HISTORY OF ISRAEL

From the Creation to the Present Time

A NEW PRESENTATION

By

SULAMITH ISH-KISHOR

IN 3 VOLUMES
ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
THE JORDAN PUBLISHING CO

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New York

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HEBREW PUBLISHING COMPANY, NEW YORK

Printed in U.S.A.

VOLUME ONE

FROM THE CREATION TO THE
PASSING OF MOSES

PREFACE

The ever-rich, ever-new treasury of our people's faith continues to dominate the world of Jew and non-Jew. While the principles and spirit of such an adaptation as I offer here cannot essentially vary, I have tried to make it easier for children to enjoy and for teachers to present the matchless beauty and intense human feeling of the Bible, as well as its deep religious meaning.

A new system of dividing the chapters, a series of simple but stimulating questions following each chapter, and careful visualizations of the action by means of fresh wording, are some of the features of this new adaptation.

I hope it will convey to all who read it something of the inexhaustible delight the author feels in continued re-study of the Bible.

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CHAPTER ONE

“HOW THE WORLD BEGAN”

Have you ever tried to make anything?

“Oh, surely!” you say. “I can make a paper boat!”

Now let us see if you can. You can take a piece of paper and twist it and cut it till it looks like a boat. But can you make the paper?

“Oh, no!” you say. “The factory makes the paper. At the factory they take rags or wood and they beat it to pulp and then they stretch it out into paper.”

But can they make the wood?

“Why, no,” you tell me. “The wood comes from trees.”

Who made the trees?

Ah, you know that! “God made the trees!”

When you and I and the factory-workers talk about “making” things, we only mean, changing them from what they were at first. No human being can “make” anything. Only God can do that.

Go into the garden and look around you. Look up into the sky. Look down into a lake. Every-

where are things that only God can put upon earth. That is what we mean by "creating."

Now what was the world like before there was a sky? Before there was a sun? Before there were lakes and seas? Before there were dogs and cats and goats and cows and all the other animals? Before there were grown people, or little children, or anybody at all?

Shut your eyes.—What do you see?

"Nothing at all," you say. Well, that's the answer!

Before God created the world, there was nothing at all,—except God.

Who is God? What is He like?

I can't answer that. I don't know. Nobody knows.

We know that He exists, because we see the world that He has made. It couldn't make itself. The Creator of all,—He is God.

In the beginning, God looked upon the nothingness. And He said, "Let there be light." And the darkness moved away like water when you blow on it, and instead of the darkness there was Light!

God saw that the light was good, but He knew that the darkness is useful, too. So He made the Light slowly go away; the darkness came back. And the darkness went away again, and the light

came, and in this way Day and Night began. And the first darkness and the first light were the first day.

And now God began to make the world!

He divided the Everywhere into two parts. The upper half was the sky, and the lower half was below the sky. And while He did this, the darkness came and went, and the light came and went, and the evening and the morning were the Second Day.

Then God spoke His will again. "Let dry land appear." And the Everywhere heard His word, and obeyed Him. All the waters that were underneath the sky came together in great seas, wide lakes, and running rivers, and the dry land appeared.

And on the dry land there sprang up strong trees with wide boughs sprouting green leaves and delicious fruits; there grew all kinds of vegetable plants, peas and beans and tomatoes and carrots and many others good to eat. Lovely flowers took root and blossomed, the red rose and the dainty sweet-pea and the bright daffodil with its yellow bells. How beautiful they looked! How good they smelled! And the evening and the morning were the Third Day.

Then God created the sun in the sky, to give

bright light and warmth in the daytime; and He made the moon and the stars to give soft, silvery light through the darkness of night. When the moon and stars come out we know it is time for rest. And the evening and the morning were the Fourth Day.

Then in the empty oceans and lakes and rivers God made fishes and sea-creatures of all kinds: huge sharks and whales, tiny goldfish and sardines, eels and clams and every other kind of fish you can think of, and strange sea-monsters such as you have never seen!

And into the air God put all the winged beings, the mighty eagle that builds his nest on the mountain-tops, and the tiny brown sparrow that comes to chirp at your window for a crumb; He made robin redbreast, and the swallow, and the lark that sings so sweetly at dawn, and the nightingale that sings even more beautifully at night. And the birds flew about, and sang to each other, and the eagle was good friends with the sparrow, because God blessed them all and loved them. And the evening and the morning were the Fifth Day.

Then God said, "Let the land bring forth living creatures." So on earth, as well as in the air and the water, all kinds of animals began to live, frisky goats and gentle cows and graceful deer,

furry squirrels and jolly dogs and playful kittens. None of them were afraid of any of the others. In the hot, damp forests of the jungle the tawny lions and striped tigers moved about, eating the grass and drinking the river-water. Great gray elephants curled their long trunks and trumpeted for joy because they were alive. Green crocodiles splashed in the muddy pools, gleaming snakes slid through the reeds. And they all loved each other, and none of them wanted to hurt any of the others.

QUESTIONS

1. What did God make on the first day? On the second day? On the third day? On the fourth day? On the fifth day?
2. How did all the living creatures, which God had created, feel toward each other?
3. What kind of living creature had He not yet made?

CHAPTER TWO

WHEN THE WORLD WAS HAPPY

Now the earth was ready for Man!

There were fruits and vegetables for him to eat, flowers for him to look at and smell, animals of all kinds to serve him, and the sun and moon to give him light. And God said, "I will make man."

So God created man in His own image; He formed his body out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being. He gave man the power to think, and the power to feel. And the body which God had made out of the dust got up and spoke and breathed the fresh air and smelled the flowers and felt the warm sunlight; he knew that he was alive, and he felt happy, and praised God Who made him.

Because God had given him the power to understand more than the animals, He made him the ruler over all that lives upon the earth, over all the birds in the air and the fishes in the water, and all the trees and plants. And the evening and the morning were the Sixth Day.

Now God had finished.

He had made the light, on the First Day.

He had made the heavens, on the Second Day.

He had made the seas, lakes and rivers, and the dry land with its trees, flowers and fruits on the Third Day.

He had made the sun, the moon and the stars on the Fourth Day.

On the Fifth Day, He had made all the creatures that live in water and all that live in the air.

On the Sixth Day, He made all the animals, and He made Man.

And now it was the Seventh Day, and God rested. And He blessed the seventh day, and made it a holy day forever. And He said that man should always have the seventh day for a holy day of rest after his work.

And whenever the seventh day comes around, we remember that God rested on this day, and we also rest. We show that this is a special day by lighting candles, and eating a special bread called "halleh." We put on our prettiest clothes, and we all feel happy and friendly. And while we rest, we praise God for giving us the Sabbath, and we thank Him for His love and goodness to us. His children.

QUESTIONS

1. Whom did God make on the sixth day?
2. Why do we keep Sabbath?

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT ADAM DID

The Man whom God had made was very happy!

He lived in a beautiful garden that God had planted for him. Here it never rained or snowed. The wind was always warm and pleasant; the sun shone all day, and the bright stars came out every night. The flowers never died; birds sang all the time. The Man lay on the grass and looked up at the lovely blue sky, he ate the sweet fruits, he drank the clear water of the river, and he blessed God and thanked Him for the wonderful life God had given him.

While he sat on the grass, he saw the yellow lions walking by, and the bright-eyed little fawn with his soft grey coat, and the tiny new lamb jumping about, and the sly tiger, and the tall gray elephant with his leathery legs like tree-trunks. He was not afraid of them, and they were not afraid of each other. They were all friends.

God let man see all the animals, and the man gave them names, and even today we call them by the names which he gave them. And the man

called himself Adam, which means "earth," for God had made him out of the dust.

Adam walked wherever he liked in the lovely garden, and he ate all the fruits he saw, but there was one tree which he never went near. God had commanded him, saying,

"Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the Tree of Knowledge thou shalt not eat. If thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die."

Adam did not know why God gave him this command. But he did not want to do anything to make God angry. So whenever he saw the big tree with its shining leaves and beautiful ripe fruit, he walked quickly away from it.

Many, many days went by. Though Adam was very happy, he began to feel lonely. He wanted to share the sweet fruits and the blossoming flowers with somebody else. And God saw his loneliness, and said,

"It is not good for man to be alone. I will make him a helpmate."

Suddenly, as Adam lay on the grass, he felt himself falling into a deep sleep. God made this sleep come upon him, and while he slept, God took one of his ribs out of his side, and from this rib He made a woman. So Adam was not lonely any more.

How happy the woman was when she woke up

and saw the garden! Adam called her Eve. She too loved the birds and the animals and the flowers; she ran about and sang all day and she blessed God for giving her life.

One day, as she went to pick an apple from its branch, she jumped back in surprise! A long, green snake was curled around the branch, and its narrow bright eyes were looking straight at her. And the snake spoke to her.

"Has God told you that you may not eat of all the trees of the garden?" he said.

"We may eat the fruit of all the trees," answered Eve, "except that tree which is in the middle of the garden. God has said that if we eat of that tree, we shall die."

"Ah!" said the snake, its eyes sparkling wickedly. "God told you that because He knows that if you eat the fruit of this tree, you will become just as wise as He is! No, you will not die if you eat that fruit; you will become equal to God!"

"Can that be possible?" thought Eve. "How wonderful that would be!"

She went near the tree, and stood under its broad branches. She looked at its apples, and it seemed to her that no other fruit in the garden was half as beautiful as these apples.

She put out her hand and touched an apple.

'Then she felt frightened, and drew her hand back. Then she thought of what the snake had said, and she put her hand out again. She never thought of the wonderful kindness of God, and how naughty it was to disobey Him. She pulled the apple from the branch, put it to her mouth, and took a bite.

Quickly she ran to Adam, and gave him the apple to taste. When he saw it, though he knew what tree it had come from, he too forgot God's command, and thought how wonderful it would be to know everything, and he took the fruit and ate of it!

QUESTIONS

1. What did God tell Adam not to do?
2. Who came to the Garden of Eden to keep Adam company?
3. What wicked creature was in the Garden?
4. What did the snake want Eve to do?

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NEW BLESSING

Now that Adam and Eve had eaten the apple, a strange and awful feeling began to trouble their hearts. Never before had they had an unhappy moment. Now they felt frightened and sorry for what they had done. They began to be afraid of the merciful God, because they had disobeyed Him. They were ashamed of themselves, because they knew they had done wrong.

Trembling, they waited for what might now happen to them.

Now the voice of God was heard in the garden. Instead of feeling the great love and happiness which used to fill their hearts whenever they heard Him speak, they were afraid. They ran and hid themselves in the bushes. But they could not hide from God.

God called to Adam, and said, "Where art thou?"

Trembling, Adam answered. "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I hid myself."

Then God said, "Has thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee not to eat?"

And Adam grew still more frightened, and he said, "The woman tempted me, and I did eat."

And God spoke to Eve, and said, "What is this that thou hast done?"

Eve hid her face in her hands, and answered, "The serpent tempted me, and I did eat."

So God laid a curse upon the serpent, so that he could never walk upright any more, but must crawl on his stomach in the dust forever, because he had tempted Eve to disobey the command of God.

And because the man and woman had wanted great power and knowledge more than they wanted the love of God, He sent them out of the beautiful garden, where life had been so easy, and He made them wander upon the earth. From now on they must toil and grow weary; they must know hunger, and pain, and sorrow, and at the end, they must die.

So Adam and Eve went out of the garden together. At the gate of Eden God placed an angel holding a sword of fire, so that they could never come back there again.

They walked about on the earth. The ground was hard and rocky and there were no more lovely flowers nor fruits to eat. Thorns and thistles grew everywhere. They had to pick herbs to eat, and sometimes they could not find any food at all.

Eve cried bitterly, for she knew now that the serpent had told them a lie. They had not gained



EXPULSION FROM EDEN

wisdom; they had lost the Garden of Eden, and they had lost the love of their fellow-creatures.

Adam was sorry for her. He forgave her for tempting him, and he comforted her so that she did not cry any more. He saw that he must work to get food for both of them. So he found seeds, and he planted them in the ground. And he watched over them, and he dug the ground to make them grow, and he worked all day in the hot sun until the sweat poured from his brows.

Then seeds grew, and leaves came up! How happy they were to see these leaves, and then to see how the leaves grew into ears of corn! They took the corn and they ground it, and made bread out of it, and ate it together. And their hearts were glad, because they had worked for this food. And because they were sorry for each other, they were kind to each other, and loved each other more than ever.

Thus God made them happy with work and with love, and blessed them even while He punished them.

QUESTIONS

1. How did Adam and Eve feel after they had disobeyed God?
2. How did God punish the snake?
3. What was the punishment of Adam and Eve?
4. How did they live when they were sent out of the Garden?

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FIRST BAD MAN

How beautiful was the world! When autumn came, and the leaves turned red and golden, Adam and Eve thought it was even more beautiful than the summer. Then winter came, and the trees were sparkling with frost; the white snow tenderly covered their tired ground; the water turned to ice, and they could walk upon it. Winter seemed even more marvelous than autumn!

But they grew tired of the winter; they longed to hear the birds sing again, and to see the bright colors of fruit and flowers. Then the spring came, the snow melted, the ice vanished from the water. The sky was blue again, the birds came back and sang; the green buds put out tiny tender leaves on tree and plant. Everything was happy, and Adam and Eve were happy too.

But the creatures on earth were different from the ones in the Garden of Eden. They were not kind and loving. The strong animals drove the weak ones away from them; the lion and tiger chased the poor little lambs and rabbits, and when they caught them, they killed them for food.

You see that even the children of mankind, whom God had made rulers over the earth and who ought to have known better, became very selfish. Selfish people always become cruel, because they would rather hurt the other person than give in to him. They did not trust each other. Each one tried to get the best tent, or the finest farm, or the fattest sheep, for himself; he did not care what the other people got. So of course there were quarrels, and anger.

And because mankind stopped loving each other, they forgot God's love for them. They prayed to Him and made sacrifices to Him, only because they were afraid that He would punish them if they did not.

Now the first man, Adam, had two sons, Cain and Abel.

Abel was a very good man. He was a shepherd; he loved animals, and he loved to play with the little woolly lambs and to take care of them. It made him happy to find the greenest grass for them to eat, and fresh water for them to drink. He watched over them so that the wolves never caught them. So all his sheep grew fat and healthy and woolly, and their numbers kept on increasing.

Abel prayed to God because he loved Him. He saw the beautiful world, and the happy sheep, and

he enjoyed his life, and so he thanked God for all these things. He made sacrifices to God, because in those days that was the way in which people showed their gratitude to God.

But Cain was quite different from Abel. He was selfish.

He was a farmer, and had wide corn-meadows and great orchards with all kinds of fruit-trees; the soil was fertile and the seeds were good seeds. But he was careless and did not work hard. He did not take care of his orchards, so insects ate the fruit-buds; he did not attend to his vines and vegetables, and so of course his farm was not very successful. His corn was often withered on the stalk; his apples were often sour or rotten.

Cain was angry. He felt very jealous of Abel, who was getting along so well. He did not say to himself, "Abel works hard and I am lazy; so he is more successful than I." No; he thought, "God must be angry with me for some reason. I will make a sacrifice to Him. Then he will stop being angry; He will make my corn grow and make my fruit-trees bring forth larger fruit."

So he took a large basket, and went out to pick fruits and vegetables for an offering to God. He began to take the finest ones, but then he thought he would rather keep these for himself. But he

was afraid to take bad ones, in case God would not accept them. So he picked those which were not bad and not good, and he hoped God would not care.

When his basket was filled, he went up the hill, where a heap of stones was placed for an altar. There he met Abel. He saw that Abel's altar was covered with flames. Abel explained that he had just offered a lamb to God; he had picked the very best and fattest lamb in all his flock, though even that was not good enough to offer God who had given him everything. And now God had sent down these flames to show that He accepted the offering, and that He was pleased with Abel's love.

Cain smiled to himself, and thought Abel was silly to have given up his very best lamb. He put his basket on the altar, and waited for the flames. But no fire came from Heaven. God did not want Cain's mean and selfish offering, and He would not accept it.

QUESTIONS

1. Which do you like better, Cain or Abel? Why?
2. Which would you rather have,—a small present that someone really wanted to give you, or a big present that the giver didn't really want you to have?
3. Why did God refuse to accept Cain's offering?

CHAPTER SIX

THE SIN OF CAIN

Cain did not stop to think that God did not need either Abel's lamb or his own fruits. God wanted it only as proof of man's love and obedience. Abel's sacrifice was made out of love, while Cain's was made because he wanted God to give him something in return.

Full of anger and jealousy, Cain marched away, thinking bad thoughts about Abel. God saw the sin that was in his heart, and He spoke to Cain, saying,

"Why are you sad? If you do what is right, everything will be well with you. But if you go on being selfish and jealous, you will surely commit a great sin."

Cain did not pay attention to this warning. He did not believe that his feelings were wrong. When he saw Abel again in the fields, and he saw how happy and fortunate Abel was, his heart filled with such rage that he did not know what he was doing. He came up to Abel and hit him heavily on the head. Abel fell down.

Cain looked at him where he was lying, and he saw blood on the ground near Abel's head. He called him, but Abel did not answer. Frightened, Cain turned and ran away as fast as he could go.

Then a great stillness came over the earth. And the voice of God was heard, saying,

“Where is thy brother Abel?”

“I know not,” answered Cain, sullenly. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

The voice of God grew louder, and He said,

“What hast thou done? The blood of thy brother Abel crieth unto Me from the ground. Cursed art thou. A fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be forever more.”

And now Cain realized the terrible thing that he had done. Bitterly he wept, and said,

“My sin is greater than I can bear. Now I must wander all over the world without rest, and whoever sees me will kill me, as I killed my brother.”

God saw that Cain’s sorrow was sincere, and that he truly repented of his awful crime. So God set a mark upon Cain’s forehead, so that no one should dare to kill him. And Cain went far away into the Land called Nod, and he lived there.

QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever seen some one else get ahead of you in your games or in your work?
2. How do you feel toward that person? Do you feel jealous?
3. Does jealousy help you to get ahead? Isn’t it better to say, “I must try harder and then *I* will be ahead”?
4. What was the result of Cain’s jealousy?
5. Did God kill Cain in return for killing Abel?

CHAPTER SEVEN

WHEN IT RAINED FORTY DAYS

Although the beautiful world which God had given to man was such a big world, with so many farms and fruit-trees, everybody was afraid that if he let other people get enough to eat, there would be nothing left for himself! So they fought, and cheated, and quarreled, and forgot all about God. Everybody was unhappy; all hated and feared each other.

There was only one man in the world who was good and kind. He loved everybody, and whenever he saw people quarreling he would try to find out what the trouble was, and to make peace. He often gave them his own money, or his own possessions, in order to make them happy again. He was kind to the poor, and he tried to help all who needed anything.

God looked down upon the world, and saw that it was full of misery and sin, and He decided to send a flood to destroy it. But He would not destroy Noah and his family, for Noah was a good and pious man. His sons were called Shem, Ham and Japhet. God knew that Abraham would descend from Shem, and that he would be the first of the patriarchs, the father of the Jewish people. So he prepared to save Noah.

One night, as Noah slept, a vision came to him. He heard the voice of God, saying,

“The end of all flesh is come, for they fill the earth with violence. . . . Make thee an ark of gopher wood . . . and I will establish My covenant with thee, and thou shalt come into the Ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons’ wives. And of every living thing thou shalt bring into the ark seven pairs of the clean and two pairs of the unclean . . . and take thy food into the ark.”

Noah was very sad to think of the rest of the people of the earth, who were going to be drowned.

He obeyed every word that God had said unto him. He chopped the gopher wood and cut it into planks, and built the ark. Then he brought into it the animals and birds which God had told him to save, and he collected much food and stored it away inside the ark. Then he and his whole family went into the ark, and remained there.

How the wicked people laughed when they saw the ark! They mocked and jeered at Noah, and did not believe that God would do anything to punish them for their sins. Noah said nothing, for he was sorry for them.

Then, one day, the sky grew very dark. Clouds spread over all the heavens. Rain poured down. It poured, and it poured. They saw neither the

sun by day nor the moon by night. Some people could not walk in the streets, for the rain was up to their knees. The houses began to be flooded. People went up to the roofs. The water rose to the house-tops, and the people climbed into trees or swam to higher houses. Then the water came up to the tops of the highest houses, and over the topmost branches of the trees, and the terrified people swam to the hills and mountain-sides.

Higher and higher climbed the waters. The rain never stopped and never grew less. Whole cities were uprooted and swept away. The people on the mountainsides saw houses and palaces floating by on the waters. Soon the mountain-tops also were covered.

Everywhere the eye could see, there was nothing but water, and still the rain came down. Only one speck could be spied, bobbing up and down on the waves. Yes,—it was the ark! Noah and his family and the birds and animals which he had taken in, according to God's command, were the only creatures left alive in the whole world!

QUESTIONS

1. Why did God decide to destroy the world?
2. Whom did He save?
3. Why did God save Noah?
4. How did Noah and his family escape?
5. What creatures were in the Ark together with Noah and his family?

CHAPTER EIGHT

AFTER THE FLOOD

Forty days and forty nights it rained. Then the rain stopped.

But the waters remained on the face of the earth, and there was nothing to be seen anywhere but the long, dark, greenish waves of the limitless sea of rain, with bits of destroyed houses or branches of uprooted trees floating on its surface.

Weeks passed, and weeks passed, and Noah thought that the water must be going down. So Noah opened a window of the ark, and sent forth a raven to fly about and see if it could find some dry place on which to perch.

But the poor raven flew and flew until its wings were unable to keep open any longer, and then it flew back to the ark. So Noah knew that there was no dry spot yet.

He waited a while longer, then he took a dove and sent her out into the air to look for a dry spot. The dove flew and flew in ever widening circles about the ark, but she too had to come back, for there was no place for her to rest. So Noah opened the window of the ark and took her in again.

Seven days later, Noah sent the dove out again. All day long she was gone, and Noah looked out of the window waiting for her. Then, when sunset came, he saw a tiny speck flying towards the ark. It was the dove, and in her beak she carried an olive-leaf freshly plucked.

So Noah knew that somewhere on a mountain-side the waters had gone down enough for an olive-bush to be seen above the flood. He waited seven days more, then sent the dove out again. And this time the dove did not come back. Thus Noah knew that she had found dry land!

Now, as he looked about over the wide stretches of water, he saw small, dark islands; these were the mountain-tops, showing above the waters. Soon the ark, as it floated along, grounded upon the top of Mount Ararat, and there it came to rest.

Noah looked out, and saw how the whole earth was gradually coming into view again. His heart rejoiced, for he was tired of the rain. Soon the command came from God to leave the ark and go out upon dry land again with his family and the birds and beasts that had been saved.

And Noah looked upon the clean earth, and hoped with all his heart that in the future the new people who would live on the earth would be good and loving and faithful to God. He built an altar,

and offered burnt-offerings, to show his love for God and his thanks for the mercy that had been shown him.

And God was pleased with Noah, and He said, "I will not again smite every living thing." And He blessed Noah and his sons, and promised them that there should never again be a flood over all the earth, and He said,

"Behold, I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and all flesh upon the earth."

Noah looked up, and arching across the sky he saw the radiant, beautifully colored rain-bow. And he blessed God, and went out upon the earth to sow seed and plant trees afresh.

QUESTIONS

1. How long did the rain keep falling?
2. Why did the dove come back the first time Noah sent her out?
3. What did the dove bring back the second time he sent her out? What did that prove to Noah?
4. How did Noah know when the flood was over?
5. What was the name of the mountain on which the Ark rested?
6. What was the first thing Noah did when he came out of the Ark?
7. What did God promise man-kind?
8. What is a rainbow like?

CHAPTER NINE

THE TOWER THAT WOULD REACH TO HEAVEN

Noah died, and his sons and his sons' sons lived and multiplied upon the earth. They forgot that it was because of Noah and his goodness that God had saved them, and thought it was because they were specially wonderful people.

They decided that they would like to reach up into heaven and see what it was like, and perhaps go and live there! They decided to build a beautiful city, and in the middle of it they would build a tower. It was going to be a very tall tower. It was going to be the tallest tower in the world! Yes, it was going to reach right up into heaven! Then, they thought, they would know everything and they would become as wise as God, and they would live in His heaven.

So they began to build.

They got bricks and stuck them together with mortar, and put them one on top of the other. They built houses and streets and palaces. Then they began to build the tower.

Soon the tower was as tall as house, and then it was as tall as a tree, and then it was as tall as a hill-top, and then it was twice as tall as a hilltop, and then it was three times as tall as a hill-top, and still they went on putting on more bricks, and more

bricks and more bricks, and more bricks, and the tower got taller and taller and taller, so that if you looked at it from the ground it seemed to reach almost into the clouds!

They were so anxious to make the tower reach into Heaven, that if one of the builders fell down and was killed, they merely shouted, "Send up another builder!" and nobody cared about the poor man, nor about his widow and his fatherless children. But if a single brick fell off and had to be replaced, they would gnash their teeth and cry with rage.

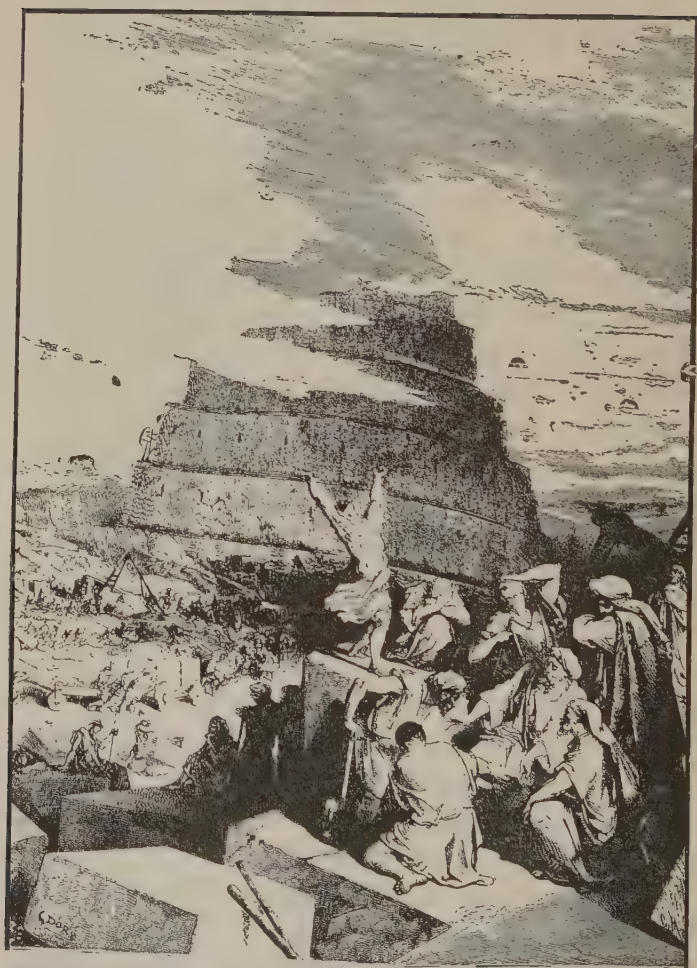
The tower was now as high as a mountain, and the men who were working at the very top of it could hardly see the city spreading out below them with its sunny streets and its shady palm-trees and its men and women walking about.

Now God had been very patient with these proud and wicked people, but now He was angry with them, and He decided to stop their work and show them how foolish they were.

One day, a workman called to his companion to pass him some bricks.

The other man stared at him as if he had gone crazy. He answered him, but he spoke such queer words that the first man could not understand him!

So he asked another man for the bricks. This



TOWER OF BABEL

man also stared at him, and then laughed, and then spoke in other funny words, quite different from the first or the second man's talk.

What could this mean? The workman thought that the others must be mocking him. He got angry, picked up a piece of brick, and threw it at his companion. The other man shouted at him, and then they all climbed down and began to quarrel. A crowd of other workmen collected around them, and all began talking at once.

But, strange to say, not one of them could understand a word the others were saying! God had made everyone of them talk a new language.

When people cannot understand what they are saying to each other, they cannot work together. So the people had to stop building the tower, and they separated and scattered all over the world.

They wandered away to different countries, and the deserted city and the tower fell into ruins and became dust. So the tower was called "Babel," which means confusion.

QUESTIONS

1. What did the people try now to build?
2. Was it possible for them to do what they wanted to do?
3. What happened to the foolish people?
4. Name as many languages as you can.
5. Where did the people scatter to?

CHAPTER TEN

GOD GIVES US OUR LAND

What became of these families who scattered from the tower of Babel? They settled down all over the world. They had children and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren. By and by each of these families had become a nation which had its own special language.

Sometimes a group of families would travel about from place to place, looking for better and richer soil. These were called "nomads" which means "wanderers."

The head of one of these wandering tribes was a man called Terah. He had a son called Abram, who was a very wise, very kind man. They had settled in a place where the soil was stony; there hardly grew enough grass to feed their cattle. So they moved to a place called Haran. The grass here was good, and they stayed.

But the people of Haran were not good! They worshipped idols, and they were wicked. Abram did not like to live near them. He worshipped the true God with a pure and loving heart; he liked to be good to people and he could not bear to see the meanness and cruelty of the people of Haran.

He longed to go and live somewhere else, where the people were honest and peaceful and would not mock at him for worshipping the invisible God instead of idols of clay and stone.

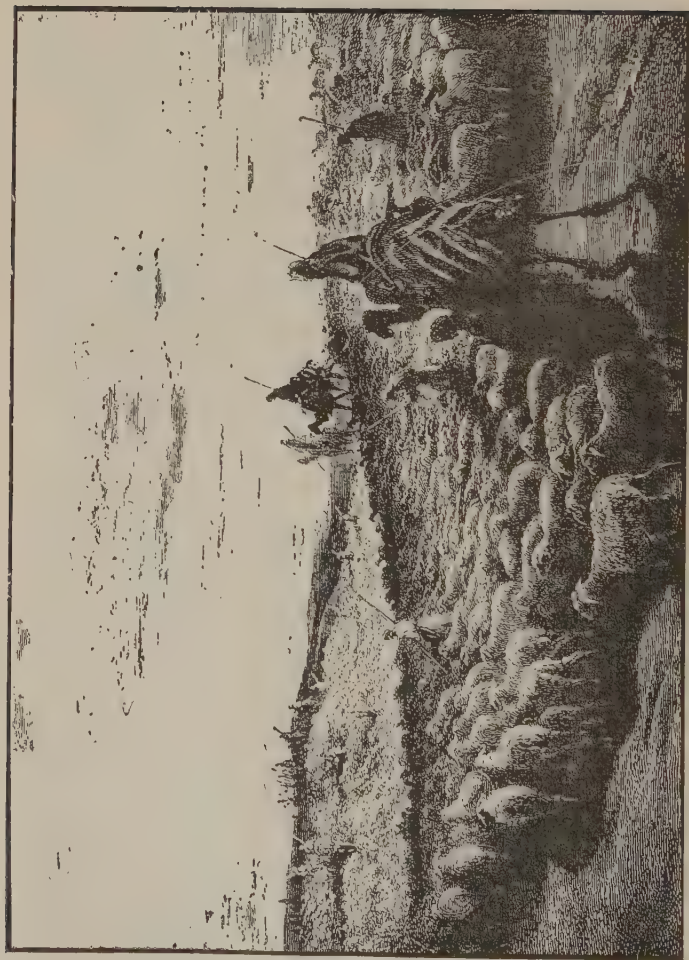
God knew Abram's desire, and He was pleased with him. He said to Abram,

"Arise, and get thee out of this country and away from thy kindred and thy father's house, unto a land which I shall show thee. I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee."

In great joy, Abram arose. He called his family and his servants, and told them that they were going to another land which God had blessed. He collected his property, his flocks and his camels, and they all set forth. His nephew Lot went with them.

For a long time they traveled, and at last they came to a beautiful land, the land of Canaan, with long, low hills, and palms, and fruit-trees, and much green grass. It was the land which God had promised him. He settled down in the south, between Bethel and Ai, and there he built an altar to God.

Abram and Lot grew very rich. They had



ABRAHAM RETURNS TO CANAAN

many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, and many servants and tents.

But trouble came. The shepherds of Lot were always quarreling with the shepherds of Abram. They said that there was not enough pasture-land nor enough wells for both. Abram was sorry, for he did not like quarrels.

So he said to Lot,

“Let us not quarrel, for we are of the same family. Let us rather separate. Choose any part of the land that you like, and I will take a different part. If you like the part to the left, I will go to the right. If you like the right, I will go to the left.”

All Lot cared about was rich pasture-land with thick grass and plenty of wells so that his flocks would prosper. He did not care what kind of people he lived among, or whether they worshipped God or idols.

He looked over the wide plain of the Jordan, and he saw that it was fertile and beautiful, like a garden. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were in this plain, and the people of these cities were the most wicked and idolatrous people that ever lived. But this did not worry Lot; he chose to live in the beautiful grassy plain, so he went there and settled down there among those bad peo-

ple. His punishment came many years later, when God destroyed these cities because of their wickedness, and Lot and his family had to run away to save their lives, and they lost the riches which they had wanted more than anything else.

Abram was very happy to stay in the land of Canaan, where he could live a peaceful and holy life among good people.

God loved Abram and said to him,

“Lift up thine eyes, and look to the northward, and to the southward, and to the eastward, and to the westward. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy descendants forever. I will make thy descendants as many as the dust of the earth. Arise, and walk through the land, for to thee will I give it.”

Then Abram removed his tent and went to dwell at Hebron, by the oaks of Mamre, and there he built an altar to God.

QUESTIONS

1. What kind of tribe did the father of Abram come from?
2. What was the name of Abram's father?
3. Why did he want to move away from Haran?
4. What did God promise him?
5. Who went with Abram to the land of Canaan?
6. Why did Abram and Lot separate?
7. Where did Abram stay? Where did Lot go?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WHAT THE ANGELS FORETOLD

In the warm and lovely land of Canaan Abram lived in peace and happiness. He was kind to everybody; his servants worked hard for him because he was so good to them; his shepherds took care of his flocks because they knew that he wanted every one of his animals to be well-fed and properly tended. He became richer and richer. Because he was thankful to those who served him well, he made his best servant Eliezer the chief of his household.

Only one thing made Abram sad. He had no children.

One night, as he lay sleeping on his couch, the voice of the Lord came to him, and Abram arose and went out of his tent. And God said to him,

“Look up into the heavens, and count the stars if thou canst.”

Abram looked up. The dark sky was crowded with twinkling stars, and the more he counted the more he saw. He could not count them. Then God said,

“Thy descendants shall be as many as the stars.

Kings and princes shall descend from thee, and thou shalt be the father of a great nation."

Great joy filled Abram's heart, and he thanked the Lord God for His promise. And God changed Abram's name to "Abraham," which means "father of a multitude." And He changed the name of Sarai, Abraham's wife, to Sarah, which means "princess."

Abraham waited patiently for God's promise to be fulfilled. But the years passed on, and no son came to him and his wife. Sarah became very sad, and began to wonder if God's promise would really come true. Now in those days the law decreed that a man might have more than one wife. Sarah asked Abraham to marry her maid-servant, Hagar. Abraham married Hagar, and a son was born to Hagar, and they called the child Ishmael.

Sarah was very sorry that she had not had a son herself, but she was quite ready to love Ishmael as if he were her own. But the little boy, though he was strong and healthy, was rude and wild. He was cross to Sarah and to his mother; he beat the servants, and was sulky to his father. He did not want to learn anything, and he did not want to know about God, although Abraham taught him how merciful and loving God is.

Often as Abraham looked at Ishmael he could

not help feeling sad. He had hoped that his son would be kind and learned and loving. But he was old now, and Ishmael was his only child, so he tried to be very patient and kind to him, for he thought that Ishmael was the son promised him by God, from whom the great nation would descend.

One hot day Abraham sat under the trees at the door of his tent, looking out over the broad fields and to the wide green hillsides where his hundreds of sheep and cattle were pasturing.

He lifted his eyes, and suddenly saw three strangers standing near him. He had not seen them walking toward his tent. They looked very hot and tired. Their sandals were covered with dust and sand; their foreheads were damp with sweat, and the long white garments they wore were mud-died and torn, as if they had traveled a long way.

Abraham jumped up, and ran towards them, and bowed down before them, and said, "Come in, I pray you, and rest yourselves." You see, in those days there were no places for travelers to rest and eat, unless people invited them into their homes. Abraham wanted to make them feel fully welcome, so that they should enjoy their rest and their meal. He was a kind, good man.

His servants brought water and washed the strangers' feet, to cool them. He went himself



ABRAHAM RECEIVES THE THREE ANGELS

and prepared meat and cakes and cool drinks. And he stood beside them and waited on them as they sat under the shade of the trees, for he wanted to show them how glad he was to be of help to them.

When the men had eaten, they arose. They smiled on Abraham, and their faces shone with beauty like the sun. Then one of them spoke, and said,

“The blessing of God is upon thee, Abraham. Sarah thy wife shall have a son!”

Speechless with reverence and joy, Abraham bowed down to the ground. He knew now that they were not men, but angels whom God had sent, and he was full of gratitude. When he raised his head, the angels said farewell to him, and went away.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did God change Abram to Abraham?
2. Why was Abraham disappointed with Ishmael?
3. Who came to visit Abraham?
4. What did they promise him?

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE TWO SONS

How happy Sarah was now! How happy the whole household of Abraham was! Only Hagar was angry and jealous, for she thought that now her son Ishmael would not be the heir to Abraham's wealth.

One day, just at the time that the angels had prophesied a little boy was born to Sarah! What joy, what gladness, filled the house! Abraham and everybody else feasted and sang and thanked God. The little boy was called "Laughter," which in Hebrew is Isaac.

And he grew up just like his name. He was so pretty, clever, and healthy that everyone smiled with pleasure to see him. He became all that Abraham had hoped for. He was kind and good to everybody; he loved to learn, and when his father taught him about God, he would sit and listen for hours at a time, his beautiful little face bright with happiness and love. He was good and patient even with Ishmael, who often teased him and hit him. But though everyone else adored little Isaac, Ishmael hated him.

“Send Ishmael away,” said Sarah, “I fear he will do harm to Isaac.”

“No,” said kind Abraham. “Ishmael is also my son. Let him stay with us.”

Although Sarah often begged him to send the other boy away, Abraham would not do it. But one night the voice of God came to Abraham, and told him that if he sent Ishmael away, no harm would come to the boy, but he should also become the father of a numerous people. So Abraham was comforted, and he sent Ishmael away with his mother, and from Ishmael descended the Arabian people.

Isaac grew to be a tall and handsome boy; he was everything his father wanted him to be, and Abraham loved him more than anything else in the whole world. Often he thought that he would willingly lose every single thing that he possessed rather than see any harm come to Isaac.

One day, as Abraham was praying, he heard the voice of God.

“Arise, take thy son,” said the Voice, “thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering.”

Now you know it was the custom in those days to make sacrifices to God. Often it happened that



ABRAHAM TAKES ISAAC TO THE ALTAR

human beings were sacrificed to God. And Abraham thought that God wanted him to offer up his beloved son as a proof of his great love and obedience to God. Bitterly though his heart ached, he decided that he would have faith in God, and would obey Him, no matter how much he suffered.

So he got up early the next morning, and took Isaac with him, and two servants to carry wood for a fire, and he went up to the place which God had shown him. When they came there, and the servants laid down the wood, Abraham sent them away.

Isaac looked around. "Father," he said, "here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering?"

"God himself will provide the lamb, my son," answered Abraham.

Abraham built an altar of stones, and he piled the wood upon it. Then he told Isaac God's will, that he himself should be the precious sacrifice. Isaac had faith in God. He did not weep, nor complain. He lay down upon the altar, and let his father bind him with ropes.

Slowly Abraham prepared to offer up the child. But just as he was about to do so, a voice called out from heaven, saying,

"Abraham! Do not lay thy hand upon thy son,

nor do anything to hurt him, for now I know that thou fearest God, because thou didst not keep back thine only son from Me.”

Joyfully Abraham looked up to thank God. In the thicket his eye caught sight of a ram, whose long twisted horns had caught in the branches. Quickly he unbound Isaac, and let him down from the altar. He seized the ram and sacrificed it instead of his son Isaac.

He knew now that God does not want human sacrifices. And after this, the Hebrews never offered human sacrifices to God, although the heathen nations kept on offering children to their false idols.

So Abraham came home with Isaac, and everyone rejoiced to see them, and they lived in peace and happiness and worshipped the merciful God.

QUESTIONS

1. What name did Abram give his new son?
2. What did God tell Abram to do with Ishmael?
3. What race descended from Ishmael?
3. What race descended from Israel?
4. How did God test Abraham's love for Him?
5. Other nations offered human beings as sacrifices to their idols. Did the Hebrews offer human sacrifices?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HOW REBEKAH WAS FOUND

Because God loved Abraham and blessed him, he prospered in everything that he did. His herds of cattle, his flocks of sheep, his stores of grain were the greatest in the land. He had great treasures of gold and silver. Isaac his son grew up strong and handsome and good.

Abraham never forgot the words of God. He knew that a great people would descend from him through Isaac. He wanted Isaac to marry a woman of their own Hebrew family, one who worshipped the true God, and who would be a good and gentle wife to him. He did not want him to marry a girl from a family which worshipped idols.

All Abraham's family lived far away, in Syria. So he called his chief servant, Eliezer, whom he trusted, and said to him,

"Swear to me that you will go to my country, to my relatives, and choose a wife for my son Isaac among the young women of my own family."

"But suppose she will not want to go away from her own family?" asked Eliezer. "Must I then take Isaac to the land where she lives?"

Abraham did not want to let Isaac go to another land, for God had promised to give Isaac the land of Canaan, where they now lived. So he answered,

“If the woman will not come, then you will be free from keeping this oath. Do not take my son to Syria.”

Then Eliezer swore to do as Abraham commanded him. You see Eliezer was an honest man; he would not swear to do anything until he was sure that he could keep his oath.

So Eliezer prepared to go to Syria. He took ten camels and loaded them with precious stuffs, with veils and with rich jeweled robes, with ornaments, and treasures. He said farewell to his master Abraham, and to Isaac, and he set off across the hills to the city of Nahor, in Syria.

As he traveled he began to think how he should choose this wife for Isaac. It seemed to him, that the most important thing was that she would be kind and helpful. So he formed a plan.

When he came to Nahor, he made his camels kneel down beside a well near to the city, to wait for someone to give them water. In those days they had no way of getting water except from a well. You had to let down your pitcher into the well and pull it up again full of water. The full pitchers were heavy and hard to pull up, and no-

body liked to do this work any more than they had to.

So Eliezer prayed to God, saying,

“Oh Lord God, be kind to my master Abraham. Help me find the right woman for his son’s wife. The daughters of the men of this city will soon come out to draw water. Now let it happen that one of these girls shall give water to me, and that she shall say, ‘Drink, and I will give thy camels water also.’ Let this girl be the one whom Isaac shall marry.”

Even while he prayed, he saw a graceful young girl coming out from the city gate, with a pitcher on her shoulder. As she came nearer, he saw that she was beautiful and sweet, and her expression was friendly and clever.

She came to the well, and dipped her pitcher. As she brought it up full of pure, clear water, Eliezer said to her,

“I pray you, let me sip a little water out of your pitcher.”

At once she took down the pitcher from her shoulder. She rested it on the palm of her hand, and tipped it over toward Elizer, saying, kindly,

“Drink, my lord.” In those days “my lord” meant the same as “sir.”

Eliezer was delighted with her charming man-



ELIEZER AND REBEKAH

ners. He thanked her, and drank of the water. Meanwhile, the girl looked about her. She saw all the camels kneeling about on the grass, licking their lips with their dry tongues, for the poor things were tired and thirsty, and they could not get any water for themselves. She was sorry for them, and thought it would not be great trouble to give them water. So she said,

“Let me draw water for your camels also.” So she poured the rest of the pitcherful into the drinking-trough, and gladly the camels dipped their heads down and drank it; then she drew another pitcherful, and another, and another, until she was too tired to lift the pitcher any more, and by that time all the camels had drunk and were refreshed, and they grunted thankfully.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Eliezer?
2. Where did Abraham send him?
3. Why did Abraham send him there?
4. How did Eliezer decide to choose a wife for Isaac?
5. Did God answer his prayer?
6. Who came to the well?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC

Eliezer was very happy! This girl was both beautiful and kind. He only feared that she might not be of the family of Abraham. Quickly he asked her name.

And what do you think she said? She answered, "I am Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel." Bethuel was Abraham's nephew! In his delight, Eliezer blessed God for hearing his prayer and for finding this wife for Abraham's son Isaac. He opened one of the bundles on the camels' backs, took out golden rings and bracelets and precious jewels, and gave them to Rebekah. He asked her if there would be room for him to stay in her father's house that night. She answered yes.

But first she ran home and told her father Bethuel that Eliezer had come, and that he would like to rest in their house. Her brother, Laban, went out of the city to meet Eliezer and invite him to come at once. He led him into the city and then to their house; here the servants washed his feet, and provided straw for the camels to rest upon, and they set the best of food before him.

But Eliezer was so anxious to know if they would allow Rebekah to leave Syria and be married to Isaac, that he said,

“I will not eat until I have told you why I came here.” He explained to them who he was, and how Abraham had sent him to find a wife for Isaac, and how he had prayed, and God had answered his prayer.

Bethuel and Laban were very pleased. They said,

“Yes, Rebekah shall go to Canaan and be married to Isaac.”

They all rejoiced, and Eliezer opened the camels’ loads and took out more splendid jewels and ornaments and rings of silver and gold, and fine embroidered garments, and gave them to Rebekah. He gave presents also to all her family, and then he feasted with them.

Next morning he got up very early and set out at once to bring Rebekah home to the house of Abraham and Isaac, for Abraham would be anxious to know how he had succeeded. Rebekah said goodby to her family, and she mounted one of the camels and they traveled to Canaan.

All the long way Eliezer told her about Abraham, how good and holy he was, and how everybody loved him. And he told her about young Isaac,

who was so kind and righteous, and handsome. They came at last to the long, low hills of Canaan; as they rode into the field, they saw Isaac praying there. Rebekah put on her veil, and got down from her camel, and Eliezer got down too and went and told Isaac all that had happened. Isaac was very happy that he was going to marry Rebekah, for he loved her as soon as he saw her.

Abraham too rejoiced greatly. He blessed them both, and they were married with great joy and feasting.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Rebekah's father? What was her brother's name?
2. Were her family pleased when Eliezer asked them if Rebekah might marry Isaac?
3. Were Abraham and Isaac pleased with Eliezer's choice?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

HOW JACOB WAS BLESSED

When a man has great riches, he must know how to spend his money wisely. Otherwise he will bring ruin to himself and cause misery to others.

When a man is the head of a great family, he must be wise and kind and understanding. Otherwise his family will always be quarreling, and other people will dislike them and make fun of them.

When a man inherits a position of high rank, it means that he must be noble and righteous in everything that he does. Otherwise people will mock at his position and at all who obey him.

The birthright which Isaac inherited from Abraham meant that Isaac had all these things: great riches, the position as head of his family, and the rank of judge and priest over his tribe.

Isaac was wise, he was righteous, he was obedient to God. Therefore he deserved the birthright; everyone respected him and was glad to obey him. And God's blessing rested upon him.

Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau was the elder, and so the birthright and the blessing would be his after his father Isaac

died. He was a big, strong man, with hairy arms and a red, strong face. He spent all his time hunting in the forest with his bow and arrows. Whenever he slew a deer, he brought its flesh to his father. And Isaac loved him for his bravery and his strength.

But when his mother Rebekah tried to teach him about the duties of the firstborn, and to explain to him the duties of the priesthood and the judgeship which he would inherit, Esau did not want to listen to her. He would not learn how to make sacrifices to God, and he did not care whether he did right or wrong. All he wanted was to go hunting.

But Isaac his father was growing old and blind. He could not take care of his lands and his flocks and his servants any more. He could not show the people how to serve God. He could no longer give judgments between people who disputed with each other.

Who did all these things? Esau was always hunting. It was the younger son, Jacob, who took his father's place. It was Jacob to whom the servants and shepherds came for their orders. It was Jacob who looked after the planting of the seed and the reaping of the harvest. It was Jacob who saw to the shearing of the sheep and the gathering of the fruit, the digging of wells and the feeding of

animals. When people quarreled or made mistakes, they came to Jacob to advise them or to judge between them. He knew all the duties of a priest, and he was very sorry that he did not have the birthright, so that he could become a priest of God and a judge of the people.

Isaac was blind; he could not see how Jacob did all the work, and how he studied and prayed and helped people, while Esau was only seeking for his own pleasure. But Rebekah, their mother, saw everything. Often she wondered what would happen when Isaac died.

Then she remembered a prophecy which had been made to her. The voice of God had come to her before her children were born, and the voice had said,

“Thou shalt have twin sons, and each shall be the father of a nation. One shall be stronger than the other, but the elder shall serve the younger.”

Rebekah was very glad when she remembered this. For she loved Jacob, and she knew that he was more worthy to be the chief of the people of God than Esau would ever be. She wished to fulfil the word of the vision, and to make the birthright belong to Jacob.

One evening, as Jacob was preparing some red pottage, Esau lifted up the flap of the tent and

came in. He threw his bows and arrows into a corner, and flung himself down on a heap of fur skins, for he was very tired after the day's hunting.

How good the pottage smelt which Jacob was cooking! He said to Jacob,

"I pray you, give me some of that food, for I am faint."

Jacob was not pleased with Esau, who ran about all day and let everyone else do the work. Some day Esau would have to be the priest of the family, yet he neither knew nor cared about prayer and sacrifice. So Jacob answered,

"Sell me the birthright."

"What do I care about my birthright?" answered Esau. "I am hungry, and I want to eat. I may be killed any day while I am hunting, then I won't need any birthright!" So he laughed, and sold Jacob the birthright, and he ate and drank and got up and went away.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the names of Rebekah's twin sons? Which one was older?
2. Did Esau like to work, or did he like better to go hunting?
3. Who did the main work?
4. Who deserved to be the real chief of the family,—Esau or Jacob?
5. What had God told Rebekah about her children?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

JACOB OBEYS HIS MOTHER

Time passed. Isaac was very old, and he felt that he would soon die. Before he died he wanted to give the blessing of Abraham to his oldest son, Esau. He did not know Esau had sold his birth-right. And Esau did not deserve to have the reward of the blessing if he did not want to perform the duties of the birthright.

Isaac lay very sick and quite blind. His family and servants were very sad, for they knew he was dying. He called Esau, and said to him,

“My son, I am old and ill. Go now to the field, bring me some deer’s-flesh, and I will bless thee before I die.” Esau obeyed him, and went out to hunt for a deer.

Rebekah heard what Isaac said, and she remembered God’s prophecy, that her elder son should not be head of the family. She quickly called Jacob to her, and told him what Isaac had said to Esau.

“Go to the flock, Jacob,” she said, “and fetch me two kids of the goats, and I will prepare them, and

your father will eat, and he will bless you instead of Esau."

"But perhaps my father will touch me, and he will know that I am not Esau, but Jacob. For my skin is smooth, and Esau's is hairy," answered Jacob.

"I will lay the skins of the kids on your hands and neck," said Rebekah. "The skins are hairy; they will feel like the skin of Esau."

Jacob obeyed his mother, and brought her the two kids of goats. She prepared them and laid the skins on Jacob's arms and neck; he took the steaming hot meat to Isaac as he lay on his couch. Isaac thought it was Esau, and he stretched out his trembling old hands over Jacob's head and he blessed him with the blessing of Abraham, saying that he should be the chief of the family and the father of the race, and he should prosper in everything that he did.

As soon as Jacob had gone, Esau came in. A slain deer hung over his shoulder, and he shouted to the servants to prepare it for his father.

Isaac sat up, trembling, on the couch. He understood now that it was not Esau, but Jacob, whom he had blessed. He was sorry, because he did not know how Jacob really deserved the blessing, and Esau did not deserve it.

How angry and bitter Esau felt when he found out what had happened! He came to Isaac's side, and cried out, "Bless me too, even me, oh my father!"

Isaac stretched out his hands, and he blessed Esau with a different blessing. He blessed him that he should always be a mighty soldier and that he should not always serve his brother, although Jacob must now be the head of the family.

Esau's heart was very angry with his brother; he hated him and wanted to kill him. But you will soon see that Esau had done something which made Isaac feel glad that he had given the blessing to Jacob instead of to Esau!

QUESTIONS

1. Do you think Esau would have sold his birthright for a little food if he had really wanted to be chief of the family?
2. What did Isaac ask Esau to do?
3. How did Jacob get the blessing?

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

JACOB'S WANDERINGS BEGIN

You remember how anxious Abraham had been that his son Isaac should marry only a girl of his own family, one who had been taught to worship the true God.

Well, what do you think Esau had done? He had secretly married a girl who was a heathen and an idol-worshipper.

How sad and angry Isaac and Rebekah felt when they heard of this!

Now Isaac was so glad that he had blessed Jacob to be the father of the race instead of Esau, that he called Jacob to him and repeated the blessing of Abraham over him. And Isaac said,

“My son Jacob, do not marry a heathen girl. Arise and go to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father, and choose one of the maidens of the family to be your wife.”

Jacob felt very sad to leave his father and his home land. But it was better for him, because Esau was still angry with him and threatened to do him harm.

As Jacob traveled on and on through the fields

of Canaan, out into the deserts and stony places, his heart began to ache, and he thought,

"Perhaps I shall never come back to my dear home.

When night came, he lay down on the bare ground to sleep, with a stone for his pillow. God took pity on him and sent him a beautiful vision. He saw a great ladder reaching up to heaven, and angels walking up and down on its rungs. And he heard the voice of God, promising him that the blessing of Abraham would surely come true for him. So the wanderer felt comforted. He woke, and called the place Bethel, which means, the house of God.

Journeying on towards the east, Jacob came to a wide field. He saw three flocks of woolly sheep lying on the ground around a well, and the well-mouth was covered with a huge, heavy stone. The shepherds were with the sheep; they told Jacob that they were from the city of Haran.

"Do you know Laban, the son of Bethuel?" he asked them.

"Yes," they answered, "here comes his daughter Rachel with his sheep."

The shepherds always waited until evening, when all the rest of the shepherds had come, before they gave their sheep water, because the stone at

the well-mouth was so heavy that they could not move it unless they all took a hand.

But Jacob was very strong. He looked at young Rachel coming to the well; she was so lovely that he could not take his eyes away. To please her, he went himself to the well-mouth, and alone he rolled the huge stone away so that she could give her sheep the water to drink! Everybody was surprised to see his great strength.

Jacob wept for joy when he saw Rachel, for he was so happy to see one of his own family after all these long wanderings among strangers. She wondered who he was and why he wept, so he told her.

"I am Jacob, your cousin, the son of your father's sister Rebekah." And when he saw that she was glad to see him, he kissed her. So she went home and told her father Laban that his sister's son was here. Laban came quickly to meet Jacob; he kissed him, and took him to his home, and made him dwell with him.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jacob go away from his home?
2. What dream did God send him?
3. Whom did Jacob meet at the well?
4. Where did he go to live?

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

WHAT HAPPENED TO JACOB

Jacob stayed a month in Laban's home. He would not stay merely as a guest. He insisted on working for him, and so he kept Laban's sheep. But Laban said,

"Why should you work for me for nothing?"

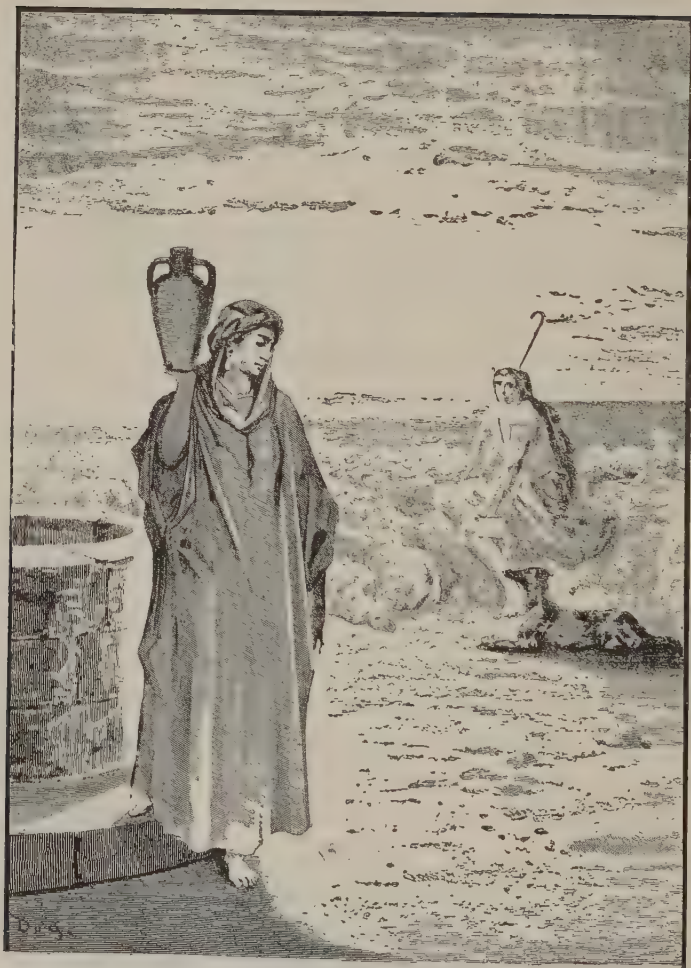
"I will serve you for seven years," answered Jacob, "if only you will let me marry your daughter Rachel." For Jacob loved Rachel very much.

"Very good," said Laban. "Do so, and I will give you Rachel for your wife."

How hard Jacob worked now! In the frost of the night and in the heat of the day, in rain and in sunshine, he watched over the sheep, and watered them and pastured them, and kept wolves away. Laban's flocks increased and prospered. And the seven long years passed by.

It was now time for him to marry Rachel. Great preparations were made. A wonderful feast was prepared. The bride was brought in with a veil over her face, and Jacob was married to her.

When the veil was taken off, how surprised Jacob was! It was not Rachel, but her older sister



JACOB AT LABAN'S HOME

Leah, whom Laban had given to him for his bride!

Very angry was Jacob. "Why did you do this?" he asked Laban. "I served you for Rachel, and you have given me Leah."

"In my country," answered Laban, "the younger sister may not be married before the older one. But if you will serve me for another seven years, I will let you marry Rachel too." For in those times men could have more than one wife.

Jacob had to agree. Although Laban had cheated him, he served him just as faithfully as before. He took care of the flocks so well that they kept on increasing in value. Laban became rich, for in those times people counted their wealth by the number of sheep and oxen that they possessed.

"Stay with me still longer, and I will give you part of the flocks for your wages."

"I will stay," said Jacob, "if you will give me for my wages all the sheep and cattle that are born speckled or spotted."

Laban gladly promised this, for very few animals are born speckled or spotted.

But God was pleased with Jacob for his hard work and his faithfulness. He blessed him, so that great numbers of the flocks were born speckled and spotted. Jacob prospered, and became rich,

and had many herds of cattle, and many camels and asses, and he had many servants to help him.

Laban saw all this, and he became very jealous. He did not think of all the hard work Jacob had done to become rich; but he grudged Jacob his wealth. He became mean and unkind to Jacob, and Jacob was unhappy.

He did not know what to do. He longed to go back to his homeland, Canaan, to see his family and his friends. But he did not know if God wanted him to go there. So he prayed, and the angel of God appeared to him in a dream, saying,

“Arise, get thee out of this land, and return to the land of thy kindred.”

Gladly Jacob prepared to obey. He collected his flocks and his herds and his camels, and he packed all his belongings and put them on the backs of his camels. He told his wives, Leah and Rachel, and his children and servants to get ready. They said goodby to Laban and his family and they set out on their journey home to Canaan.

QUESTIONS

1. What reward did Jacob ask for his work?
2. Did Laban do as he had promised?
3. Why did Jacob decide to go home to Canaan?

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE BROTHERS MEET AGAIN

As Jacob came nearer and nearer to home, bad news was brought. His brother Esau, who now lived in the land of Seir, was coming towards them with four hundred soldiers. Jacob was very sorry that he had to be afraid of his own brother. He wanted Esau to forgive him and love him again. He prepared a fine present for him; he took the very best sheep and cattle of his flocks, and sent them ahead to meet Esau, and told the servants who took care of the animals to tell Esau they were a present from his brother.

That night a strange thing happened to Jacob.

An angel appeared to him, and wrestled with him until dawn, but the angel could not conquer him. And Jacob made the angel bless him. The angel did so, and said that Jacob should be greatly blessed, because he had not been conquered by the angel of God. So Jacob felt cheered up, and he rode boldly on in the direction of Esau.

Esau was now very near with all his soldiers. Jacob saw a cloud of dust in the distance, and a

great number of marching men; he saw their spears and shields glittering in the sun. Esau had become a great soldier; he was armed with spear and shield. But Jacob was unarmed and unshielded.

Jacob came near to Esau. He got down from his camel, and bowed himself down seven times before him, and waited for what Esau would do.

But when Esau saw his brother, who had been away for so many years, his heart melted and he could not do him any harm. He forgot his bitter anger and his desire for revenge. He ran towards Jacob, and picked him up and embraced him, and kissed him tenderly, and the brothers wept for joy to see each other and to be friends again after all this time.

Esau told his brother to keep all the fine flocks he had sent him for presents, for he thought Jacob was not rich, and could not afford to give them to him. But Jacob showed him all his flocks and possessions, and begged him to take the gifts. So Esau took them. You see Esau was not a bad man; he was only hasty, and wanted to have his own way.

Then Jacob showed Esau his wives and his children, and Esau spoke kindly to them and was pleased to see them. Esau asked Jacob to come and live with him in his own home in Seir, but

Jacob knew that the time had come for the blessing to be fulfilled. So he said no, he must go to the land of Canaan, the land which God had promised to the children of Israel.

So they kissed each other and parted in friendship. Esau went back to Seir, and Jacob went on towards his homeland. His heart was light and happy because his brother had forgiven him. He prayed to God and thanked Him for His loving care, and went onward, and came to Canaan.

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Jacob afraid to meet his own brother?
2. How did he get the name "Isra-el?" What does it mean? (Note: some people pronounce the name "Isree-ul." Is that right? Is "Is-ray-el" right?)
3. How would you have treated Jacob if you had been Esau?
4. Did Esau treat him kindly?
5. Why did Jacob feel so happy after the meeting with Esau?
6. Don't you feel happier to be friends than to be enemies with anyone?

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE ADVENTURES OF JOSEPH

Now you shall hear one of the most wonderful adventure-stories in the whole world. And you will see that when evil things happen to us in life, it is usually because of something that *we* have done which was foolish or bad, and not merely because of other people's badness.

You remember that God had promised Jacob that a great people should descend from him. The promise already began to come true. Jacob had twelve big, strong sons. Their names were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, and the youngest two, who were the sons of Rachel, named Joseph and Benjamin.

They were all fine boys, but there was something about the eleventh son, Joseph, which made him seem like the leader of all the rest of them. He was full of life and strength, and was not only very clever but he did his duties more thoroughly than the others. Jacob loved Joseph more than any of the other sons, and hoped that he would become the leader of his people. Because Joseph

was very handsome and graceful, he made for him a coat of many colors.

His brothers wore only plain clothes, and they were very jealous of this sign of their father's love for Joseph. They quarreled with him all the time. Then Joseph did something he ought not to have done: he complained to his father about them.

What is the result of complaining about a person who is unkind to you? He will not treat you better; he will only hate you worse and instead of merely annoying you, he will try to do you harm. Joseph's brothers were very angry with him for telling tales. You will see how he was punished for this.

One night, Joseph dreamed a strange dream. He did not keep quiet about it, but went and told it to his brothers as they were resting on the grass among the flocks.

"Hear, I pray you," he said to them, "this dream which I have dreamed. We were binding sheaves in the corn-field, and my sheaf arose and stood upright, but your sheaves all bowed down to mine."

This hurt his brothers' feelings, and they said, "What—do you mean that you, the youngest but one of the family, will reign over us, your elder brothers?" And they were angry.

A few nights later he dreamed again, and again he told his dream to his brothers and to his father, saying,

“I dreamed that the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to me.”

Now his brothers were more jealous than ever, and even his father said,

“What—shall I and your mother and your brothers bow down to you?” You see, they understood the meanings of dreams quite well in those days.

But Jacob's anger calmed down, and he wondered if these dreams were prophecies sent by God to Joseph.

One day the ten older brothers went to Dothan with their flocks to find fresh pastures, and Jacob sent Joseph to visit them. He went through the vale of Hebron, past Schechem, and on to Dothan.

The brothers were lying on the ground and resting when one of them looked up and saw someone coming towards them in the distance. He recognized the colored coat of Joseph.

“Look,” he cried, “here comes our wonderful dreamer! Let's kill him! Let's throw him into a pit, and say that an evil beast ate him. Then we'll see what will become of his fine dreams!”

But the oldest brother, Reuben, was shocked. How should he save the boy from their anger?

"No, no," he told them, "we must not shed blood. Let us throw him alive into the pit. If he can't get out again, so much the worse for him!" Reuben intended to come back later and pull Joseph up.

The brothers laughed, and decided to do as he said.

Joseph now came up to his brothers; he greeted them kindly. But they did not answer him. They seized hold of him, tore off his colored coat and flung it on the ground. Then they dragged him to a deep pit, and threw him into its dark, damp depths!

QUESTIONS

1. How many sons did Jacob have?
2. What were the names of Jacob's sons?
3. Which son was the cleverest and handsomest?
4. How did the older brothers feel about Joseph?
5. If you were one of the older brothers, how would you have felt about Joseph? Isn't it better to be proud of a brother like Joseph, than to be jealous of him?
6. If you were Joseph, how would you have acted toward your older brothers? If he had not boasted to them, might they not have liked him better?
7. What wicked thing did the brothers want to do to poor Joseph?

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

“SHALL WE BOW DOWN TO THEE, DREAMER?”

Poor Joseph! There he lay in the depths of the pit! His head and body were bruised and cut by the fall. He got up and looked wildly about him to see if there was any way of escape. But the pit was deep and dark, and rats ran across it, and there was no way at all by which he could climb up and get out.

Crying, he beat on the wall with his hands, called all his brothers by their names, and pitifully begged them to save him. But they only looked over the rim of the pit to laugh and jeer at him, and to say,

“Shall we indeed bow down to thee, Dreamer?”

But another of the brothers, Judah, as well as Reuben, was sorry to see Joseph so badly treated. He made up his mind to save him.

All the brothers except Reuben sat down to eat. But Judah was worrying how to save Joseph. He looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelite merchants coming on their camels from Gilead. They were taking a load of spices, and balm, and myrrh down to Egypt.

“Ah,” thought Judah, “it is better to let Joseph become a slave than to let him die in the pit. If he

becomes a slave, we shall surely never bow down to him!"

"Brothers," he said, "I have a better idea than yours. What good will it do us if we kill Joseph? Rather let us sell him to these Ishmaelites, instead of letting him die. After all, he is our brother."

The brothers agreed that this was best. They went back and let down a rope into the pit and pulled Joseph up. He thanked them joyfully, for he thought they had only meant to frighten him. But the cruel brothers did not listen to him; they tied him with bonds and brought him to the merchants, and sold their brother to the strange men for a slave, and took for him twenty pieces of silver. And the Ishmaelites brought him down to Egypt to sell him there.

While the brothers were out of sight, talking to the merchants, Reuben came hastily back, ran to the pit, and called, "Joseph! Joseph!" He thought that now was his chance to save his poor brother. What was his horror when he saw that there was no one there! He tore his clothes for grief. "The boy is not there! and as for me, whither shall I go?" For he felt that he was to blame, being the oldest; he should not have let the others do harm to Joseph.

Now the brothers killed a goat and dipped



JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS

Joseph's colored garment in its blood, and the heartless fellows took it home and showed it to their father Jacob. How the poor old father wept! He thought this proved that his dear, wonderful son had been killed by a wild beast. His sorrow was terrible; no one could comfort him.

The merchants, meanwhile, reached Egypt. They took out their merchandise and prepared it for sale. They looked Joseph over. They saw he was a strong, beautiful, clever boy, and they would get a good price for him. They dressed him nicely in fresh garments, sprinkled him with perfume, and stood him up on a block of wood in the slave-market, for sale.

By and by a splendid chariot rolled by; in it was the captain of the king's guard. His name was Potiphar, and he was wealthy and powerful. He looked at the slaves, and at once noticed Joseph's bright face and his honest, clever eyes. So he bought him .

QUESTIONS

1. Who tried to save Joseph?
2. What did the brothers finally do with him?
3. To whom did they sell him? To what country was he taken?
4. Did they stop to think how their father would feel?
5. How did they explain Joseph's disappearance to their father?
6. What happened to Joseph when he got to Egypt?

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

JOSEPH A SLAVE

What a different life Joseph led now! He was only seventeen, but he had to work as hard as a full-grown man. No more the beautiful pasture-lands of his father's home, no more the love and tenderness of Jacob and of his friends. He worked night and day, and got no thanks and no reward.

But the steward of Potiphar's house soon found out that Joseph was too clever and too active to be kept at the same ordinary work as the other slaves. Instead of having to grind corn and press grapes and mend hunting-nets, he was ordered to keep accounts and take charge of expenses, and other such work.

He was honest and sensible, and had so many good ideas about managing a household and an estate that Potiphar soon made him overseer of the whole house. All the other slaves had to take orders from him. He helped his master to succeed in everything he did. God blessed Joseph, and made him wise and fortunate. Now he wore beautiful clothes and had servants to wait on him. But still his heart ached to be free and at home again; often after the day's work was done, he lay on his fine couch and the tears came to his eyes as he thought of his dear father, and he longed with all his might to see him again.

All the same, he would have been fairly happy, but trouble came. That is, it seemed at the time to be a great trouble, but in the end it turned out to be his greatest good fortune, as you shall see.

The wife of Potiphar was a wicked woman. She tried to make Joseph commit a sin. But Joseph told her,

“My master trusts me in all things. He gives me everything that I desire. He is very good to me. I cannot sin against him, for that would also be a sin against God.”

Angry and ashamed, the wicked woman pretended to Potiphar that Joseph had committed a sin against him. Potiphar believed her. He was terribly angry with Joseph, and he threw him into prison. Poor Joseph, who had not done any harm, was now locked up in a cold, dark stone chamber. They gave him bread and water for food.

But the keeper of the prison knew about Joseph, and God softened his heart so that he was kind to the boy. He treated him better than the other prisoners; by and by he gave him full charge of the prison, and even trusted him with the keys, because he knew Joseph would not try to escape.

Joseph prayed often to God, and God remembered him.

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, in a rage with his

chief butler and his chief baker, threw them into prison. One night they both dreamed strange dreams, and they told the dreams to Joseph, for they knew how clever he was. Joseph understood what the dreams foretold; he told the butler that in a few days he would be pardoned and set free, and then sorrowfully he told the baker that in three days the king would order him to be hanged. And as he said, so it happened.

And Joseph said to the chief butler, "When you come back to the palace of the king, remember me, I pray you, and speak of me to Pharaoh, so that he may free me. For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me in prison."

Touched by his sad words, the chief butler promised that he would remember to speak to Pharaoh of this clever, kind and charming Hebrew youth. But as soon as he got free, he did as many people do when they promise a favor: he forgot all about it.

And there in prison poor Joseph wept, and prayed to God, and still hoped for release.

QUESTIONS

1. Who bought Joseph?
2. How did Joseph win the favor of his master?
3. Why did he get put in prison?
4. Whose dreams did Joseph explain?
5. Was his explanation right?

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

JOSEPH RULES EGYPT

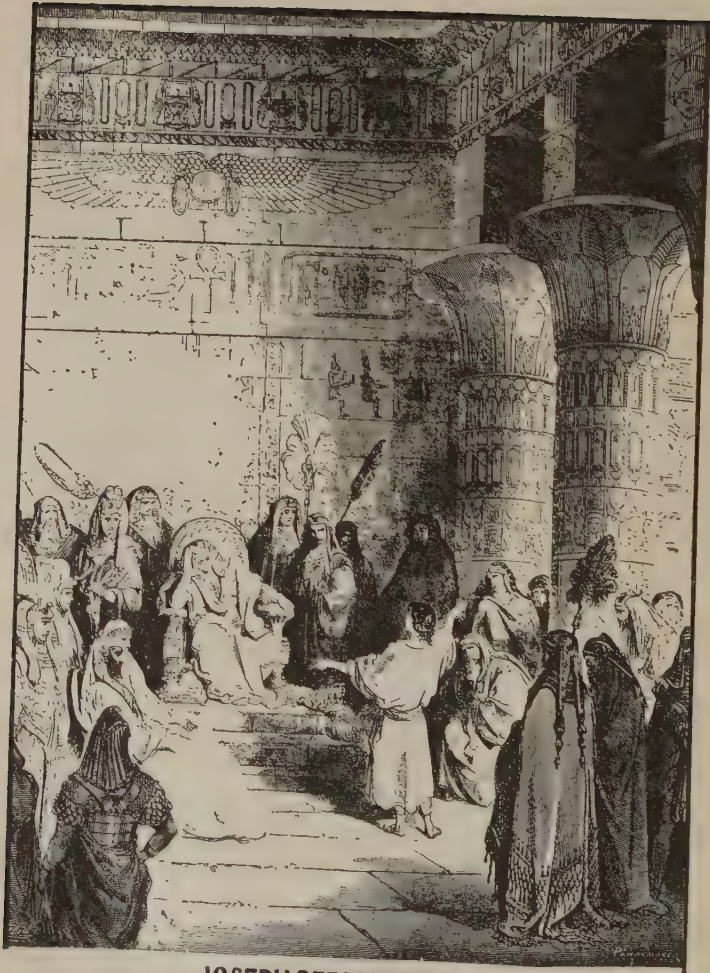
One year, and then another year, passed by. Still Joseph lived and worked in the prison. Still he prayed and trusted that God would save him.

One day, the king of Egypt was greatly troubled. He had had strange dreams. He dreamed that he stood beside a river, and out of the river came up seven fat cows, and they fed in a meadow. After them there came seven lean cows, and the seven lean cows ate up the seven fat cows. And then he had a second dream: seven ears of corn came up on one stalk, and they were full, ripe ears. Then seven thin, withered ears of corn came up, and these withered ears ate up the good corn.

Pharaoh could not forget these dreams, and he sent for all his wise men to explain them. But none of them knew.

Then at last the chief butler remembered Joseph! He bowed down before the tall, narrow throne on which the great Pharaoh sat, and told him about the Hebrew youth in the prison who could interpret dreams. And Pharaoh at once sent for Joseph.

When Joseph stood before the throne, Pharaoh told him the dreams and asked him their meaning. And God blessed Joseph so that he understood



JOSEPH BEFORE PHARAOH

what the dreams meant. And he bowed down, and said,

“Not I, but God, shall give Pharaoh a true answer, so that he shall be at peace.

“This is the meaning of the two dreams. The seven fat cows and the seven good ears of corn mean that the land of Egypt shall have seven years of plenty; there will be big harvests of wheat and corn. The seven thin cows and the seven withered ears of corn mean that there will be seven years of famine after the years of plenty.

“And there will be great suffering in the land of Egypt, unless Pharaoh will choose a wise and careful man, who will know how to save enough of the good harvests so that there will be food stored up for use during the time of famine.”

Pharaoh listened well, and he looked hard at Joseph, and he said to his counselors,

“Is not this young man the wisest of all, for the spirit of God is in him! Joseph, since God hath shown thee all these things, there is none wiser than thou art. Thou shalt be the man whom I will appoint to do the thing that thou hast said. Thou shalt be chief in my household, thou shalt rule the land of Egypt, and only I myself shall be greater than thou!”

Then he took off his ring, and he called Joseph

to come near, and he put his ring on Joseph's finger, and he put a gold chain round his neck, and ordered beautiful, rich garments to be brought for him. Joseph rejoiced and blessed God Who had remembered him, and had taken him out of prison to become a great lord.

Now everything began to come true, just as Joseph had told Pharaoh.

For seven years the harvests of grain were so plentiful that there was more than enough bread for everybody. People threw good corn away, because there was so much of it. But then there came terrible times. There was no rain, the crops withered, the fruits and vegetables did not ripen.

The people of Egypt were starving. Very few of them had been wise enough to do as they saw Joseph do,—namely, store up wheat and corn during the good years so as to have food during the bad years. Nobody but Pharaoh had full store-houses of grain. So people came from all over Egypt, and from other countries near by, to buy food from Joseph.

QUESTIONS

1. How did Joseph get released from prison?
2. What were Pharaoh's dreams?
3. How did Joseph explain them?
4. What did Pharaoh think of Joseph after that?
5. How did he reward Joseph?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

What was happening, all this time, to Joseph's cruel brothers, and to his dear father, poor Jacob, who thought Joseph was dead?

The older brothers had married and they had families of their own. Joseph's younger brother, Benjamin, was by this time a tall, handsome boy. Jacob loved him doubly, for his brother Joseph's sake as well as for his own; they were both the children of Jacob's best-loved wife, Rachel. Benjamin's face and manner reminded him of Joseph.

The seven good years passed by, and everyone seemed to think they would continue forever. But the seven bad years came, and there was no food in all the land of Canaan. Jacob and his family had no grain for bread. So he called all his sons and sent them to Egypt, with money to buy food.

But he would not send his son Benjamin, for he loved him so much that he would have worried every minute of the time, in case some evil should happen to him as it did to Joseph.

The brothers took asses along with them to carry grain, and they brought empty sacks to put the food in, and they went down to Egypt.

Joseph knew that the family of Jacob would have to come some day to buy food. He had

ordered that he should be told when they came. Now his servants reported to him that ten Hebrews had come to Egypt to buy grain. He at once ordered that they should be brought before him.

The brothers wondered why they were being brought before the great lord, the Viceroy of Egypt. There he sat on his splendid throne, dressed in fine garments, with a gold head-dress on his curly black hair and gold sandals on his feet. And when they saw him, they all bowed down before him with their faces to the earth. They did not yet know it, but you see they had really caused to happen the very thing that they had tried to prevent! If they had not sold him in order to make sure that they would never have to bow before him, he might never have become the ruler of Egypt.

Joseph did not tell them who he was. First he wanted to find out what kind of men they had become, whether they were still cruel and heartless, or whether they had become better. They did not recognize him; for how could they dream that the poor little slave had become a great and powerful noble of Egypt?

"Where do you come from? What do you want?" he asked them, roughly.

How frightened they were! Humbly they replied,

"Thy servants have come from Canaan to buy food."

"Oh, no!" said Joseph. "You have come to spy on the land of Egypt, or else you would not all come together."

"Nay, my lord," timidly answered one of the brothers, "we came all together because we are all the sons of one man. We are honest men; we are not spies."

"I do not believe you. You are spies!" said Joseph.

"Nay, my lord, we are twelve brothers; ten of us are here, the youngest is at home, and one is dead."

"Prove the truth of what you say. Go back to Canaan and bring before me this youngest brother. Then I shall know you have not lied."

You see, Joseph wanted to find out how they would feel about taking Benjamin away from their father. They had not worried about Jacob at all when they sold his dear son Joseph! He would see now if they were still so cruel.

The brothers' faces filled with grief and worry at the thought of bringing Benjamin to Egypt. Yes, they had learned to have sympathy with their poor father, and they guessed how unhappy Jacob would be if they had to take Benjamin away from him even for a few days.

With sad and troubled eyes they stood and looked at each other.

"Ah," said one of them, in Hebrew, "we have deserved this sorrow! God has punished us because we were so cruel to our brother Joseph; he begged us to save him, and we would not. Now we are punished."

"Did I not plead with you, not to sin against the boy?" asked Reuben bitterly. "You would not listen to me."

They never thought that the Egyptian governor could understand Hebrew. But Joseph of course understood every word. He remembered the terrible day at Dothan, when his own brothers wanted to kill him and then sold him for a slave; he remembered his anguish, and the sorrow he knew his poor father was feeling. His heart swelled with emotion to think that at least one of his brothers had tried to save him. He could not keep from weeping; he turned his face away so that they should not see him, and after a while he controlled himself again. For he wanted to see how they would *act*, not only how they would *talk*.

"No, I believe you are spies," he told them, still speaking roughly. "One of you must stay here in Egypt as a hostage; the rest of you must go and bring your youngest brother." So he took Simeon,

and bound him, and had him put in prison. But Joseph made his servants fill the brothers' sacks with grain, and because he would not take money from them, he put back in their sacks the money they paid. This frightened the brothers when they found it out, for they thought he would accuse them of not having paid.

Now they had the hard task of telling Jacob that he must let his youngest and dearest son go away from him. Bitterly Jacob wept when they told him.

"You have robbed me of my children!" he cried. "Joseph is dead, Simeon is imprisoned in Egypt, and now you want to take Benjamin! Never, for if any harm befell him, you would bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave."

In silent shame the brothers turned away. How indeed could they expect their father to trust them with Benjamin, when they had not brought Joseph back? So they separated and said no more.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Joseph's brothers come to Egypt?
2. Did they recognize their brother when they saw the Governor of Egypt?
3. Why did Joseph pretend not to know them?
4. Did he really think they were spies? Then why did he tell them to bring Benjamin?
5. Did Jacob want to let Benjamin go with them? If you were Jacob, would you have trusted them with Benjamin?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

"I AM JOSEPH!"

Time passed, the food was all eaten, and the family of Jacob were starving. Jacob saw that he must send his sons once more to Egypt to buy food.

"How can we go without Benjamin?" asked Judah. "If we do not bring him, the governor of Egypt will think that we have lied to him, and that we are spies, and he will slay us all."

Poor Jacob! He bowed his head in grief, and did not know what to do.

"My father," then said Judah, "let Benjamin be entrusted to me. I alone shall take care of him. If I do not bring him back safely to you, then I myself will never come home either."

Weeping, Jacob consented. He prepared presents of fine fruits and honey and spices to please the governor of Egypt, and told his sons to return the money which they had found in their sacks and to pay double the price for the grain they were going to buy. How his heart ached when he saw young Benjamin mount his ass and go off together with the rest of his sons!

Now indeed the brothers began to pay the price of their wickedness to Joseph. What care they took of Benjamin! Judah never took his eyes off the boy. They trembled for him if he even looked tired.

In fear they returned to the palace of the Viceroy. What was their surprise to be told that the governor had invited them to dine with him! They were astonished to see that he placed them all according to their ages; how could he know their ages?

They explained to him how they found their money in their sacks, and they wanted to return it to him, but he would not take it. And he gazed with hidden longing at them all, and asked them, "Is your father yet alive?" And his heart rejoiced to hear that Jacob was alive and well. And when he saw Benjamin his feelings overcame him; he hurried away, so that they should not see him weep.

But he wanted to test them. He wanted to find out if they could feel for their father's sorrow now, as they had not felt it in former times. So he thought of a plan. He ordered his servants to place his silver cup in the sack of Benjamin. Then he said goodby to the brothers, and sent them all away with plenty of wheat and corn.

As they were happily riding off, they heard men running behind them. They were servants of the Viceroy. Angrily they called to the brothers, and made them stop.

"What a shameful thing you have done!" they

said. "My lord the governor was so kind to you, and now you have stolen his precious silver cup!"

"We have not done any such thing," they answered. "Search all our sacks. If you find the cup in anyone's sack, let him be slain, and the rest of us will become slaves to the viceroy!" They were so sure that none of them had stolen it.

The runners began untying the sacks. There on top of Benjamin's sack was the shining silver cup!

Weeping with grief and fear, they all had to turn back. They came again to the palace of Joseph. They fell down on their faces before him, not knowing how they could prove their innocence.

"Why have you done this evil thing?" asked the governor, sternly.

"How can we explain it? How can we show you that we did not take the cup? Surely God has punished us for the evil which we have done. We must all be the slaves of my lord the governor," said Judah, weeping.

"No," said the governor, "why should I punish you all? I will keep only Benjamin, in whose sack the cup was found. Go, the rest of you. You are free to return home."

But the brothers did not take their freedom. The thought of their father's anguish was more than they could bear. Judah stepped forward, and said,

"Oh, my lord, let your servant speak. Our father is an aged man, and this Benjamin is his youngest child, and Jacob loves him. Bitterly did he grieve when we took him away to bring him to my lord, for he said, 'Joseph my son is dead, and now ye will take away his brother. 'Now if we return home and Benjamin is not with us, our father will die. Take *me*, let me be your slave, but let this boy go home, for I could never look upon my father's face again if I came back without him.'"

Oh, how happy Joseph was when he heard these words! He knew now that they understood what a terrible thing they had done to him; he knew that they cared more for their father's happiness than they did for their own.

Tears rushed into his eyes and ran down his cheeks. Weeping aloud, he stood up and stretched out his arms to them, and cried,

"I am Joseph! Does my father yet live?"

You see how Joseph loved his father; he tested his brothers not for what they did to him, but for the terrible grief they caused to Jacob.



JOSEPH RECOGNIZED BY HIS BROTHERS

The brothers were struck dumb with amazement and fear! How could this be? How could little Joseph be the same as this powerful lord of Egypt? They stared at him and at each other, and their hearts were shaken with the wonder of God's ways.

"Do not be afraid," said Joseph. "Come near to me." And they came near.

"Look at me," he said. "Do you not know me? I am indeed Joseph, whom ye sold into Egypt."

The brothers wept with joy as well as with shame and sorrow for their wicked deed. But Joseph comforted them, and embraced them, and said,

"Do not grieve any more, and do not blame yourselves for what you did. It was God's will, so that I should be able to save you in the time of the famine. God, not you, hath done all this. And now, hasten and go to my father, and tell him: 'Thus says thy son Joseph: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down unto me, and thou and all thy family shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and there I will give ye food.' You see with your own eyes, that it is really Joseph who is speaking to you. Tell my father of all my glory in Egypt; hasten and bring my father hither."

So they obeyed him, and traveled home. Their

hearts were happier than they had thought they ever would be again, for they were freed from the terrible sorrow of their sin. How joyfully they told Jacob the marvelous news! Jacob was so overcome with gladness that he fainted away; for a long time he could not believe that his beloved son Joseph was really alive and that he was lord of Egypt. But at last he believed it, and then began the glad journey to Egypt.

When they came to Goshen, Jacob saw a great golden chariot with many servants coming towards them. He prepared to get out of the way to let the chariot pass. But it was the chariot of Joseph, and he had come to meet his father. They embraced each other and wept for happiness, and Jacob said, "Now I am content to die, for I have seen Joseph's face again."

So they all lived in the land of Egypt, and Pharaoh was kind to them, and they were happy.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jacob finally agree to let Benjamin go to Egypt?
2. What trick did Joseph arrange in order to take Benjamin away from them?
3. Why did he do this? Did they prove to him that they now had become kinder-hearted?
4. How did they prove that they were sorry for having sold Joseph?
5. How did Joseph comfort them? What did he tell them?

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

IF YOU WERE JOSEPH——

I suppose some clever boys and girls who read this will think, "If Joseph was so worried about his father when he was sold into Egypt, could he not have sent him some message to say where he was?"

That would be a very interesting question, and this is how I should answer it.

I would remember that Joseph was a wise, thoughtful, independent boy. (How do I know that? Because he proved it later in his life.) He knew that if he should let his father know where he was, and that he was a slave, his father would at once send for him and buy him back.

But what kind of homecoming would that be? How ashamed he would feel to be brought back from slavery! What terrible rage their father would feel against his brothers! How much more bitterly than ever his brothers would hate him! Perhaps after this they really would kill him.

No, he must have thought, I will show them what I am made of. I will prove to them that I can work my own way through life. The day shall yet come when they will realize my worth, and they shall bow down to me, according to the dream which God sent me.

Also, we must remember that he did not know they had told his father he was dead.

But do not think that all the results of the horribly cruel action of the brothers were good. Evil always results from evil, although there may be some good too. In the first place, how do we know that Joseph might not have turned out to be a great man in Israel, instead of a great man in Egypt? Surely his father Jacob would rather have seen him become a chief in Israel, a man beloved for his wisdom and kindness, rather than a prince in a strange and heathen country. The Egyptians could not really have loved him, because he was a Hebrew and because he made them sell not only their farms but also their own selves as slaves to Pharaoh in return for bread, during the famine. We must realize that although by doing this he was being a true and useful servant to his master, Pharaoh, he was also causing the whole nation to be enslaved to their king.

Because Joseph was lord of Egypt, Jacob and his family had to come and settle there, in order to have food.

But you remember how anxious Abraham had been to stay in the land of Canaan, which God gave the Hebrews to live in. Remember how Isaac would not go to the land of Bethuel, but caused Rebekah to be brought to him. Remember how happy Jacob was to come back to the land of Canaan after his long exile.

Do you think that Jacob went willingly to the land of Egypt? No, he only went because he loved his son Joseph and so longed to see his face again that he would have traveled all over the world to see him, if he had to. But he did not forget God's promise about the land of Canaan. And even while he was journeying to see his son, he stopped at a place called Beer-Sheba, to pray to God and offer sacrifices.

There at Beer-Sheba the voice of God came down to him, as he had hoped, and God said,

“Fear not, Jacob, to go down into Egypt, for I will make of thee there a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt,—and *I will surely bring thee up again.*”

It was these last words that comforted the heart of Jacob, and made him travel on more cheerfully.

QUESTIONS

1. If you were Joseph, would you have tried to get back home as soon as you were sold in Egypt?
2. Did Joseph prove that he could succeed in spite of everything?
3. What were the good results of the brothers' wicked deed in selling Joseph?
4. What were the bad results?
5. Did Jacob want to go and live in the heathen country of Egypt?
6. What did God promise him at Beersheba?

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

THE PROMISE

Although for a time the Jewish family with all their children and grandchildren and servants dwelled in peace in Egypt, there was to come a time of the most cruel suffering and hardship for the Hebrews, and they were going to pass through the worst days in their history, all because they had come into a strange land. And why had they come? You know why: it was due to the jealous brothers selling Joseph into a heathen land.

But for the present, everything went well.

The family of Jacob were treated with great respect, and were given everything that they needed to live. They dwelled in the beautiful land of Goshen, and God blessed them and increased their wealth. The rest of Jacob's life passed in peace and contentment, until the time came for him to die.

One day news came to Joseph that his father was dying. At once he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and journeyed to see Jacob. His father was glad to see him, and he sat up to greet him; he kissed Joseph and blessed

God Who had not only given back his son to him, but had also let him live to see the sons of his son.

Although Jacob had lived in peace in Goshen, his heart still longed for his own land, and he said to Joseph,

“Promise me that you will not bury me in Egypt. Take my body to the land of Canaan, and let me be buried in the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham bought. There Isaac and Rebekah are buried, and there I buried Leah.” Joseph, weeping, promised, and Jacob blessed him and all his sons, and died.

Joseph wept bitterly for his beloved father, and mourned many days for him. The Egyptians also mourned for the father of Joseph. He caused the physicians to embalm the body, and went with all his brothers to Canaan, and buried him in the cave of Machpelah according to the promise he had made. Many important counselors and ministers and chief servants came with them, to do honor to Joseph, and they were a great procession.

Now you will see that the person who does a wicked deed suffers almost as much as the one whom he does it to. All these long years the brothers of Joseph had felt shame and grief for their sin. And now, although Joseph had for-

given them, they still could not forget their action, and they themselves felt that they had not been punished enough for it. For they thought,

“Surely Joseph has not really forgiven us for what we did to him. He only pretended to forgive us, so as not to grieve our father. But now that our father is dead, he will surely take revenge upon us.”

What should they do? They were afraid to go up to their own brother who had been so good to them. Instead, they sent a messenger to him, saying,

“Thy father Jacob did command us before he died, saying, ‘Say unto Joseph that I pray him to forgive you for your sin against him.’ And so we pray thee now, forgive us for the evil that we did unto thee.”

When the messenger came with the words to Joseph, he saw that his brothers thought he had not forgiven them in his heart. He understood why they had sent him the message, and his heart was deeply grieved; why should his brothers think that he was so mean and revengeful and that he was only waiting for a chance to punish them? And he wept when he heard the messenger’s words.

Now the brothers plucked up their courage and

came to Joseph, and fell down to the ground before him, and said, "Behold, we are thy slaves."

"Do not fear me," said Joseph. "Am I in the place of God? You meant to do an evil thing, but God turned it into a good thing, because through your action many people have been saved from starving to death. So do not grieve, and do not fear me any more. I will always be good to you and will take care of you and your families."

Surely the brothers were again overwhelmed with shame to see the goodness and kindness of the one they had treated so badly. To the end of their days they repented their sin.

So the years passed on, and Joseph grew old. The time came when he must die. He knew of God's promise to bring the people of Israel up again out of the land of Egypt; so he called his sons and his kinsmen, and said to them,

"I die, but God will surely remember you, and will bring you up out of Egypt into the land which He swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and to their descendants. And then ye shall carry up my body out of Egypt, and ye shall bury me in the land of Canaan."

Joseph never saw again the homeland that he loved, but he wanted to be sure that his people

would some day go back there, and live in their own country, away from heathens and strangers.

So he died, and all the people wept for him. Pharaoh and his servants wept for him, for those who knew him well loved and honored him. And he was embalmed, and was buried in Egypt.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jacob ask Joseph not to bury him in Egypt?
2. What were the brothers afraid of after their father's death?
3. Did they have cause to be afraid?
4. Why did Joseph tell his family that some day his bones must be brought to Canaan and buried there?

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

WHAT HAPPENED IN EGYPT

You have surely heard a good deal of talk in this country of America about "foreign-born" persons and "aliens." No country really likes to have many foreigners living among them. It is harder to understand people who are of a different race, who have been educated differently, who like the things you don't like, and perhaps dislike the things that you like.

As long as there were only a few Hebrews in Egypt, the Egyptians did not care how different the Hebrews were from themselves. But when the years passed on, and the Hebrew families increased greatly, and there were many hundreds and then many thousands of them in the land, the Egyptians began to feel that there was a strange race living among them. These people did not worship their idols, they did not eat the same food, they did not have the same ideas. By and by they began to quarrel with the Hebrews, and to wish they would go away.

Pharaoh had died, and his son had reigned and

died, and this one's son had reigned and died, and many more. One day there came to the throne of Egypt a selfish and cruel king who began to look about him and say to himself,

“What does this mean? Here we have many thousands of a strange race living among us. They are not Egyptians; how do I know that in time of war they might not turn against Egypt and fight for our enemies?”

He thought that the best way to deal with the Hebrews would be to treat them like a conquered race. Soon the Hebrew men and women were told that they must work for Pharaoh if they expected to go on living in Egypt. They had become accustomed to their new home, they had their houses and their occupations here, and they did not feel at all inclined to go away. So they began to work part of their time for Pharaoh.

But after a while Pharaoh began to demand that they should work for him *all* the time! He made them build two cities, Pithom and Rameses, and he did not pay them anything for their labor. Soon the terrible truth was clear to them: they had become slaves to the Egyptians. Hard taskmasters were set over them, to make them work till they dropped, and to beat them with whips if they tried to rest.

Then Pharaoh thought that surely so many of the Hebrews had died under their labor, that their numbers would be less. But he found that God had blessed them, and they had multiplied. Then he planned a terrible thing.

He gave command that every baby boy born to the Hebrew women should be killed at once by the Egyptians!

Bitterly the Hebrew mothers wept when they heard this command. Whenever a little boy was born to one of them, the family tried to hide him away, but the Egyptians came into their huts and searched in every place until they found the baby. Sometimes they would bring in an Egyptian baby and make it cry, because this usually made the little Jewish baby cry too; then they heard where the sound was coming from, and found the child, and then they drowned it without pity.

The whole people of Israel were in mourning for their children. How long would this continue? They prayed God all the time to remember their sorrow and to set them free. There was only one way that they could be made free, and this was by finding among themselves someone who could force Pharaoh to let them go. How could such a leader arise, when all the boys were being killed? and how could a helpless Hebrew

boy ever make the cruel, all-powerful King of Egypt free the Hebrew slaves?

But to God nothing is impossible. Already He was preparing to send them a leader who would free them.

QUESTIONS

1. What happend to the Hebrews in Egypt now?
2. How did Pharaoh try to destroy them?
3. What were they made to do?
4. What was now their only hope?

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

THE COMING OF MOSES

Now comes one of the most wonderful and exciting stories in the world! and the best of it is, it's a true story, and it happened to the Hebrew people when they were slaves in Egypt. It is the story of the leader, Moses, the great, wise and brave man who led the people out of slavery, and with God's help, brought them back to the land of Canaan, which God had given to Abraham and to his children forever.

One day, a baby boy was born to a Jewish woman of the tribe of Levi. Soon, she knew, the Egyptian soldiers would be coming to take the baby and drown it. She looked at its pretty little face and its wonderful, shining eyes, and something told her, "God will not let this child be destroyed." For three months she kept it hidden, but soon she knew she must send it away. So she got some reeds, and made them into a box, and rubbed the inside of it with pitch and slime, so that no water could get in, and then she put her baby inside the box and hid the box in the reeds by the river. Weeping, she went away, and sent her young daughter Miriam to hide near by and see what happened to the box.

Miriam sat a long time. At last she saw a great lady, richly dressed and waited on by many maid servants, come down to the water and prepare to go in bathing. As the lady looked at the water-side, she noticed the box, and sent a servant to fetch it.

The maids opened the box and the princess looked in. When she saw the baby, its big, bright eyes full of tears and its little arms stretching out to her, her heart was touched. "It is surely one of the Hebrew children," she said. She took the baby in her arms; he laid his soft little head on her breast, and stopped crying. And the princess loved the baby and wanted to keep him.

Miriam had been watching all this time, and now she ran forward and said, "Shall I go and call a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby?" And Pharaoh's daughter said, "Yes." So the clever girl brought the mother of the baby, who joyfully took him away to her home and nursed him for the princess.

When he could walk, he was brought to the palace and given to Pharaoh's daughter; the kind princess adopted him as her own son, and made him a prince of Egypt. She called him "Moshe," (Moses), because she had drawn him out of the water.



MOSES IN THE BASKET OF REEDS FOUND BY PRINCESS

Now the little Hebrew boy lived in the great palace; he wore beautiful garments, and a little crown on his head, and everyone bowed down to him, because now he was a prince. He became very clever and handsome, but he was also gentle and modest.

As he grew to be a man, he began to wonder about his people, the Hebrews. He wanted to go and see if they were really being made to work and to suffer in slavery. So he went to the places where the Hebrews were, and he saw how hard they labored and how they were beaten. His heart filled with pity and love for them, and with anger against the Egyptians.

He saw how they toiled all day long, how they were cursed and rudely pushed about. They were given straw and stubble, which they mixed with clay and poured into brick-moulds. Then they had to cart away the bricks and build them up into a city. If they stopped to wipe their hot foreheads or take a drink of water, the taskmasters beat them with whips.

One day as Moses walked in a lonely place not far from the city, he heard an old Hebrew cry out; an Egyptian was beating him. Moses' heart filled with blind rage; he dashed up to them, caught the cruel Egyptian and hit him so hard

that he died; then Moses hid the body in the sand.

Next day he walked again in that neighborhood, and saw two Hebrews fighting. He ran up to one of them and said, "Are you not both Hebrews? Why do you strike your companion?"

"Oh," exclaimed the man, "who made you a judge over us? Are you going to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian?"

Moses was afraid when he heard this. "Surely this thing is known," he said to himself. And the news had in fact come to Pharaoh; the king was angry to think that this Hebrew should punish an Egyptian, and he wanted to have Moses put to death. So Moses fled away, and traveled to the land of Midian.

In the land of Midian Moses came to a well to drink. He saw seven girls, the daughters of the priest, Jethro, coming to water their flocks. But some rude shepherds came up and drove them away so that they could water their own flocks first. This made Moses angry; he helped the girl to drive the shepherds away. The shepherds saw that the man who spoke to them was of noble and commanding appearance, and they were afraid of him.

You see, Moses was so kind and great-hearted,

that he always wanted to help the weak against the strong who tried to oppress them.

When the girls came home and told their father about the stranger, the priest Jethro sent for him and invited him to dwell with them. Moses stayed there and helped to tend Jethro's flocks, and he married Jethro's daughter, the beautiful Zipporah.

Moses was a good shepherd, for although he never did that work before, he knew that you can do anything if you think hard and try your best. He specially watched over the little helpless lambs, so that none of them was lost or hurt.

But he always thought about the sufferings of his people in Egypt, and he prayed to God to remember the promise He had made to make them a great people and to bring them out of the land of bondage, and he prayed that a leader would be found to save them.

He never thought, at this time, who that leader would be!

QUESTIONS

1. How did the woman of Levi try to save her baby?
2. Who watched the basket of reeds?
3. Who found the baby in the basket?
4. Why did she call him "Mo-she" (Moses)?
5. Did Moses forget the people he came from?
6. Did he want to help them?
7. Why did he run away from Egypt?
8. Whom did he help in Midian?

CHAPTER THIRTY

THE NEW LEADER

Now the time came that God heard the prayers of the afflicted people of Israel; He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and He prepared to save them.

One day, when Moses was tending the flocks of Jethro, he led the sheep to the farthest end of the wilderness, where the grass was richer. He came to the mountain of Horeb, which is called the mountain of God.

As he walked, he raised his eyes and saw a miracle! A bush which grew on the hill had caught fire; it was blazing with flames, and yet not a single leaf or twig was burned up!

Amazed, Moses went to look more closely at the bush, to see why it did not burn up in the fire. But the angel of the Lord called him out of the bush, and said,

“Moses, Moses! Come not nearer, for the place on which thou standest is holy ground. I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.”

Trembling, Moses stepped back and hid his face, for he was afraid to look. And God said,

I have seen the sufferings of My people in Egypt, and I know their sorrows. I have come to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them to a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the land of Canaan. Come now, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, and thou shalt lead forth My people out of Egypt."

Moses was troubled when he heard this. He had never thought that he himself could do this great thing. He was modest, and gentle, and he did not know how to talk to the cruel king. And what would Pharaoh say if he did speak to him? Moses feared that Pharaoh would only laugh, and would refuse to let them go.

So he said, humbly, "Lord God, who am I, that I should do this great task and lead Thy people out of Egypt? Will even the Hebrews believe that I am sent by God? They will ask, 'Who is it that has sent you? what is His name?'"

And God answered, "I am that I am. You shall say to the children of Israel that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has appeared to you. You will call together the chiefs of Israel and tell them that I have sent you to deliver them, and they will believe you.

“Then you shall go with them to Pharaoh, and you shall say,

“‘The God of the Hebrews has come down to us. Let us go, we pray thee, a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may there sacrifice unto the Lord our God.’ I know that Pharaoh will not let the Hebrews go. Then I will put forth My hand and smite the land of Egypt with miracles, and then he will let them go, and they shall take the wealth of Egypt with them.”

Still Moses could not imagine that the powerful Pharaoh would listen to him, and he said,

“Pharaoh will not believe that it is really God who sends me to him.”

Then the Lord said, “Throw down thy staff.”

Moses threw his staff down on the ground. Instantly it became a hissing serpent! Moses was frightened and began to run away, but God said,

“Put out thy hand and take it up by the tail.”

Moses obeyed, and as he picked up the snake, it became a staff again!

Then God said,

“Perform this miracle in the presence of Pharaoh, and then he will believe. But if they will not believe you, then you shall turn their rivers into blood.”

Still Moses feared that he would never be brave

or wise enough to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt, and he prayed,

“Oh, Lord God, I am not a good speaker; my speech is slow. I pray Thee, send someone else instead of me.”

Moses should have had faith that God would guide him in this task, but since Moses feared to speak, God said,

“Your brother Aaron, the Levite, shall speak instead of you. And I shall tell you what to say, and you shall tell it to him. Now return to Egypt, and have no fear, for those who desired to kill you are dead.”

Then at last Moses' fears left him, and he said goodbye to Jethro and Zipporah, and to his little son Gershom, and he went into the wilderness on his way to Egypt to perform the great task. God told Aaron to go and meet his brother; they met in the wilderness, and kissed each other. Moses told Aaron what God had said. Then they traveled to Egypt together, and gathered all the chiefs of the people in one place, and Aaron spoke to them.

The Hebrew chiefs listened to him and believed him; they were very happy to think that now God would redeem them from their misery. So they bowed down and worshipped the Lord.

Moses and Aaron were encouraged and glad that the Hebrews believed in them. Boldly now they went to the palace. They walked straight in, and came to the throne, and stood proudly before the cruel and powerful Pharaoh.

QUESTIONS

1. What miracle did Moses see?
2. Did he feel that he could be leader of Israel? Why not?
3. What did God tell him to do?
4. Did the Hebrew chiefs agree with Moses?

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

THE PUNISHMENT OF EGYPT

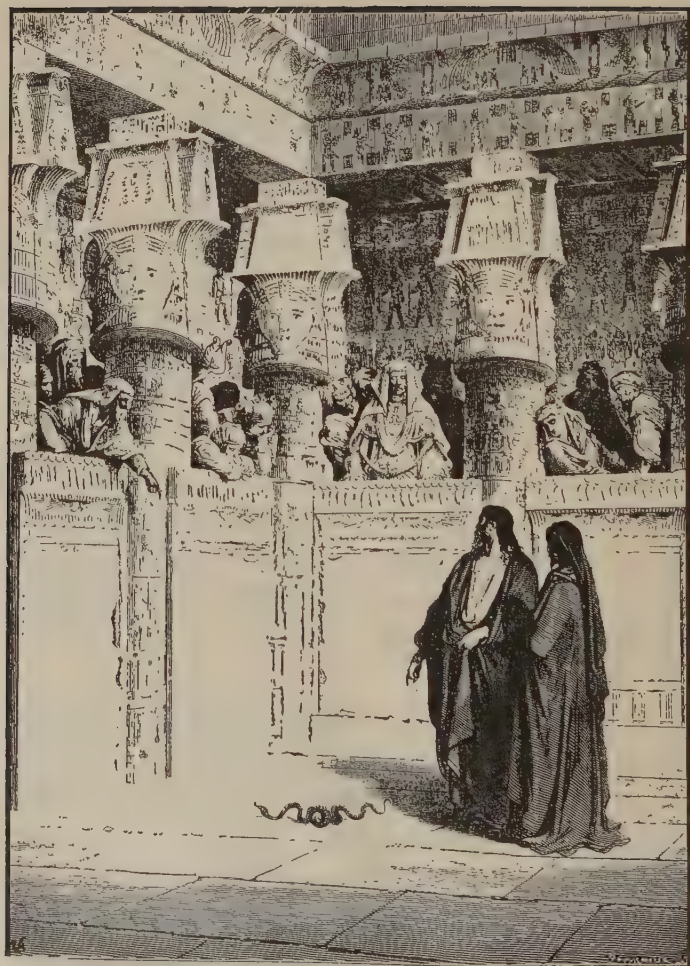
“Well,” said Pharaoh, “what do you want?”

“Great king,” said Aaron, “the Lord our God has come down to us, and has commanded our people to go a three days’ journey into the wilderness to sacrifice unto him. Now let them go.”

Pharaoh began to laugh, and all his proud servants and armed guards and magicians and wise men laughed with him. He looked out of the windows and saw that many Hebrews had gathered outside the palace to know what Pharaoh would do. He got angry and said to the two before him,

“Your nonsense has caused the Hebrew slaves to leave their work. Send them back to their tasks. There is no difference between your people and any other people.”

“Yes, there is,” said Moses, “and our God will show it to you. He will bring many plagues upon the Egyptians, but the Hebrews shall not be hurt. Then you shall see the difference between your



MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH

people and our people, and between your gods and our God."

Then Pharaoh was angry, and to punish the bold leaders he commanded the taskmasters to order the Hebrews to do much more work than ever, instead of giving them straw to make the bricks, they had to go and pick stubble for themselves. Now their labors were so much harder, that they were angry and blamed Moses and Aaron for their troubles, and did not want to listen to them any more.

Then Moses prayed, and God answered him, saying,

"You shall see what I will do. Pharaoh shall surely let the people of Israel go, but first I shall harden his heart so that I may show him many wonders, and he will know that I am God."

So Moses and Aaron went again to Pharaoh, and again they commanded him in the name of the Lord God to let the children of Israel go and sacrifice. And again he laughed at them and refused.

Aaron stretched out his rod towards a river that flowed outside the palace. Pharaoh leaned back on his throne and looked out mockingly to see what Aaron could do. But then he jumped

up with a cry of horror. The clear waters had turned to a dark red river of blood!

For seven days the waters of all Egypt ran blood, and no one could wash or drink or cook with it, except the Hebrews. But the magicians of the court told Pharaoh not to be afraid of the Hebrew God, for they said they also could turn water into blood. So Pharaoh would not listen to Moses.

Again God spoke to Moses and told him what to do. Moses went again to the king, and told him that if he did not let the people go, a plague of frogs would come upon the land. Pharaoh would not believe him. Aaron stretched out his rod, and at once swarms of green slimy frogs appeared all over the ground and the walls, and all over the whole land of Egypt; they crawled into people's beds and fell into their plates at dinner.

But Pharaoh's magicians claimed that they also could make frogs come upon the land. So Pharaoh would not yet believe in God's power. But after all, the magicians couldn't make the frogs go away! So the king had to call Moses and Aaron back again.

"Very well," he told them, "take away the frogs, and I will let your people go and sacrifice."

So they prayed, and the frogs all died, and the people gathered them together in heaps. But do you think Pharaoh kept his word? No.

QUESTIONS

1. Who went with Moses to Pharaoh?
2. What did Pharaoh say when Moses and Aaron told him God's will?
3. What did Pharaoh do to the Hebrews then?
4. What plagues were now sent upon Egypt?

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

LET MY PEOPLE GO!

Pharaoh still would not let Israel go. And God said to Moses, "Let Aaron stretch out his rod."

And Aaron obeyed, and at once every grain of dust in the land of Egypt was turned into lice. Pharaoh at once commanded his magicians to imitate this miracle, but they could not do it, nor could they make the lice go away.

"This shows the greatness of the God of the Hebrews," they admitted.

Then another plague came, and the whole air was black with swarms of flies that made it impossible to move or sleep. Quickly Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said,

"I will let your people sacrifice, but they must do it here in Egypt."

"No," answered Moses, "they must be allowed to go into the wilderness."

"Well, I will let them go, but they must not go too far," he said. For their labor was useful to Pharaoh, and he wanted to keep them slaving for nothing.

So Moses prayed to God, and the flies disappeared.

But now Pharaoh thought he was safe again, and he mocked at God and His power and said, "Why should I let the Hebrews go?" And he made them stay.

Now came many plagues, one after the other, to punish Pharaoh for all his wickedness towards the Hebrews and for his lies and false promises. But all these plagues came only upon the Egyptians, and not upon the Hebrews.

First, a terrible disease killed all the cattle of the Egyptians. Then every Egyptian found himself or herself covered with painful boils all over their bodies. Then came a fearful storm of hail and thunder and lightning that destroyed all the Egyptian harvests. Then millions of brown locusts flew like clouds over the land, destroying every grain that was left from the storm, but the grain of the Hebrews was not touched. Then a thick darkness came down and settled like a black fog over the land; for three days no one could see his hand in front of his face, but in the dwellings of the Hebrews there was light.

At last Pharaoh got sick of all this, and he said to Moses, "Let your people go and let them serve God, but they must leave their cattle here."

"That may not be," said Moses, "the cattle are needed for the sacrifice."

In a fury at Moses' bold reply, Pharaoh exclaimed,

"Go! Dare not come before me again, or I will have you killed!"

Moses went calmly away, and prayed, and God answered him, and said,

"Have no fear. I will bring one more plague upon Egypt, and after that Pharaoh will not only let the people go, he will force them to go."

So Moses came back and spoke again to Pharaoh, saying,

"Thus said the Lord our God: About midnight he will go forth over Egypt, and among all the Egyptian families the first-born shall die, from the first born of the king to the first born of his humblest servants. But not one of the children of the Hebrews shall be hurt. And then, Pharaoh, your servants will come to me and will beg me to lead my people out of your land!"

And Moses went away in anger from the palace.

Now Moses ordered every Hebrew family to slay a lamb and sprinkle its blood upon the doorposts, so that the Angel of Death might pass over the Hebrew houses. He bade them to be dressed and ready to leave their homes at midnight. All

the faithful and believing Hebrews got ready. They sprinkled their doorposts and ate the lambs' flesh together with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, for they had not enough time to wait for the bread to rise.

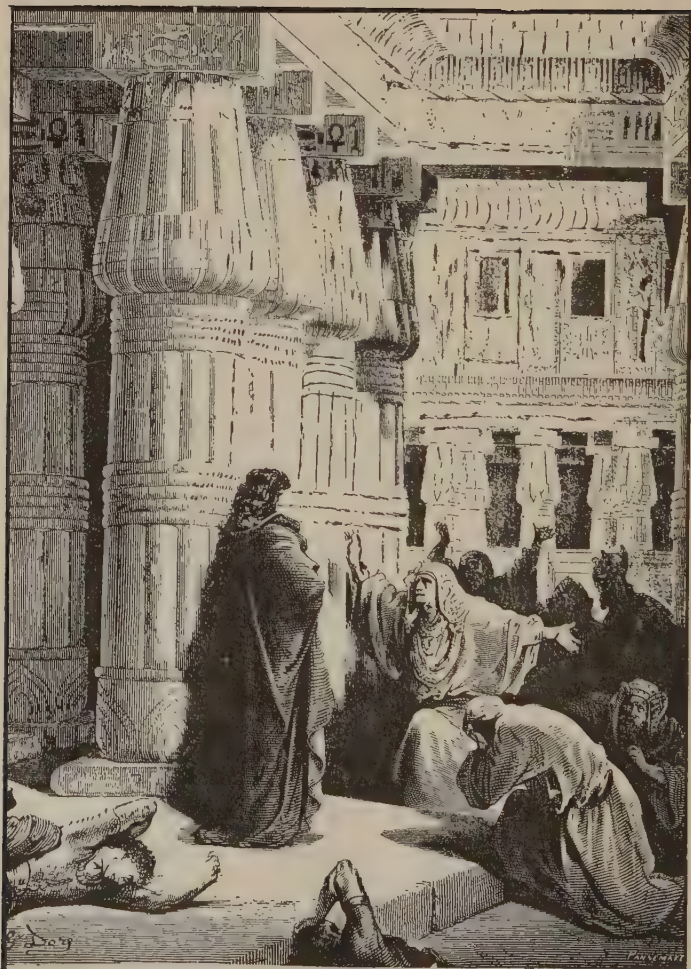
Night came, and all was still. Anxiously the Hebrews waited. Midnight! And suddenly from all the Egyptian houses came a terrible shrieking and crying! For in every Egyptian house the first-born child was lying dead!

Now the Egyptians came running to the Hebrew slaves, carrying gold and silver ornaments, money and jewels in their hands, and begging them to take all their wealth, if only they would go out of the land!

In the royal palace, Pharaoh himself had got up and dressed. Trembling, he called for Moses and Aaron, and he said to them,

"Take your flocks and your herds and go, go all of you, you and all your people, go quickly! But bless me before you go!" For now he was afraid of the God of Israel, and he feared that if Moses did not bless him more plagues would come upon Egypt.

In the streets the Egyptians wept and wailed, saying, "We shall all be killed unless these Hebrews go at once!" So the people of Israel arose



PHARAOH BEGS MOSES TO GO

and poured out of their houses in a steady stream of men, women and children, laden with the gold and silver and money which the Egyptians had given them, and carrying unleavened bread to eat on their way. So we still eat our bread unleavened when we celebrate the Passover, in memory of the deliverance from Egypt.

QUESTIONS

1. What new plagues were sent?
2. What did Moses order the Hebrews to do so that the Angel of Death might pass over their houses?
3. What happened to the Egyptians?
4. Did they let the Hebrews go, now?
5. Why do we celebrate Passover?

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

OUT OF SLAVERY

How did Moses know in which way to lead the children of Israel? He knew because God sent a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to show them which way to go. He led them through the wilderness, by the Red Sea. And as they traveled they carried with them the bones of Joseph, according to the promise that had been made to Joseph before he died.

But Pharaoh began to look around him in Egypt, and now that his fears were quieted, he began to think,

“How foolish I was, after all, to let all those useful slaves go! Who will now make bricks and build cities for me? I will catch them and bring them back.”

So he took six hundred iron chariots and a great army of Egyptians, and drove as fast as he could go, to seize the Hebrews and bring them back to be slaves again.

Soon the Hebrews heard a thundering sound and a rolling of wheels behind them. They looked about them in fear, and behold, there was the Egyptian army coming upon them in a cloud of dust and sand! They were terrified!

What could they do now? Pharaoh and his army was behind them, and the Red Sea was in front of them! If they went ahead, they would be drowned; if they stayed, they would be captured again! Bitterly they wept and complained to Moses.

Moses, not knowing what to do, prayed to God for help. And the Lord answered him,

“Why do you pray to Me? Lift up your rod over the sea, and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go across the midst of the sea, and it shall be dry ground.”

Joyfully Moses came and stood before the terrified people; the chariots of Pharaoh were now almost upon them. And he stretched out his rod over the waves.

Roaring and rushing, the waters rose up like two walls! In between these walls there was dry ground. Quickly the children of Israel ran across the stones and mud until they came to the other shore.

Pharaoh and his captains and army looked and saw the upstanding water, and without a second thought they all plunged into the riverbed to follow the Hebrews, they and their horses and their chariots and their army with spears and swords.

As soon as they were all in the sea-bed, behold!

there was another loud roaring; the waters suddenly crashed down again, and every one of the cruel Egyptians was drowned in the sea! Thus God remembered his promise to Jacob and to Joseph, and delivered Israel from Egypt..

And Moses sang a song of praise to the Lord:

"I will sing unto God, for He hath triumphed gloriously.

"The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

"God is my strength and my song.

"And he has become my salvation.

"This is my God, and I will praise Him.

"Pharaoh's chariots and his host He hath cast into the sea,

"And his chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea.

"The deep covers them.

"Who is like unto Thee, Oh God, among the gods?"

The prophetess, Miriam, sister of Moses, who had watched him when he was a tiny baby in a box among the river-reeds, also sang wonderful songs of praise to God, and the people sang too. And Moses led them onward from the Red Sea unto the wilderness of Shur, and God watched over them.

It was sandy, rocky, and hot in the wilderness. By and by the Hebrews began to forget their joy at the miracle which had saved them. They felt very tired of traveling in the heat, without shade and with hardly any water to drink when they were thirsty. Soon they had no more water left.

They shouted for joy when they saw a spring in the distance, and they hurried to it, to drink. The mothers leaned over the spring and dipped out handfuls of water and gave it to their children. But the children spat it out, for the water was bitter!

Then the people lost their patience, and they cried out to Moses,
“What shall we drink? Did you bring us into the wilderness to die of thirst?”

God showed Moses a tree. He cast it into the water, and the waters were made sweet. So the people drank, and were glad. Soon they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy shady palms, and there they rested.

Then they continued their journey. They came to a wilderness called Sin, between Elim and Sinai. Here they did not find any food, and they grew hungry, and they blamed Moses for taking them out of Egypt, for in Egypt they had had food to eat.

God saw Moses' trouble, and He said,

"I will rain bread from heaven for you, and every morning the people shall gather enough for the day's needs, and I will see if My people trust in Me."

In the morning a kind of bread, called manna, was found upon the ground, and the people ate it and were satisfied. And every Friday morning there was twice as much manna, so that the people could gather enough for two days, and not have to collect it on the Sabbath, the day of rest.

So they journeyed on, and came to Rephidim. There was no water, and the people began to come to Moses and ask him to find them water, and again they complained, saying they would all die of thirst.

Moses prayed, and God told him to smite the rock with his rod. He obeyed, and a stream of fresh water came out, and people drank.

But a new trouble came upon them. When they reached Rephidim, they met a great army, the army of Amalek, and the Amalekites attacked them and fought with them. Moses prayed God for help. The Lord commanded him to hold his hands above his head, and as long as he would do this, Israel would win. So he sat upon a hill and the people saw how he held up his hands,

and they took courage. They won the battle and drove away the people of Amalek, and they rejoiced and praised God.

And then a very wonderful thing happened!

QUESTIONS

1. How did God lead the children of Israel through the wilderness?
2. What did they carry with them?
3. What did Pharaoh do now?
4. How did God save them?
5. What happened to the Egyptians?
6. How did Moses make the waters sweet?
7. What food did God send from Heaven?
8. How did they win the battle against the Amalekites?



MOSES

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

THE GREATEST LAW IN THE WORLD

When the wandering Israelites came to the wilderness which is in front of the mountain called Sinai, God spoke to Moses and promised him that if the people would obey God and serve Him truly, they should be His chosen people forever. Moses told them this, and they were very glad, and they promised to obey God.

For three days Moses made the people prepare themselves to be given the Law. They washed their clothes, and dressed in their best, and were very careful to do nothing that was wrong. They thought about God, and waited, and prayed.

At last came the third day.

The sky grew dark. Thunder rolled and crashed. The sides of the great mountain trembled. Moses drew a line around the mountain and told the people that no one must pass across that line. So the multitude stood as close as they were allowed.

Now a great black cloud gathered in the sky and settled on the top of the mountain. A trumpet blew. Again it blew, louder and then louder still. The whole mountain was covered with



THE GIVING OF THE LAW

smoke, it shook like a tree in a storm, and the people trembled and were afraid.

Then Moses called out with a loud voice to God, and God answered him. And God called to Moses to come up to the top of the mount, and the people heard.

And the Lord God spoke, and He gave the people of Israel the Ten Commandments, which are the Law. And when the people saw the mountain trembling, and the dark cloud upon it, they feared God, and worshipped Him.

When Moses came down, the children of Israel begged him to give them God's law in his own voice, for they were afraid to hear the voice of God. But Moses told them not to fear; God had come Himself so that they would know the laws were truly from Him, and they would always remember and obey them.

These are the holy words that God spoke to us upon Mount Sinai:

“I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

2. Thou shalt not make graven images.

3. Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain.

4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath day. In it thou shalt not do any work.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet anything which belongs to another."

Many other true and wonderful laws were given that day to the people of Israel, laws that were merciful and just and kind. None of the other nations had laws which were so kind to the weak and helpless ones; even the animals were remembered, to be treated kindly. That is why when a true Jew obeys the laws of God, he becomes one of the best and kindest people in the world.

And God promised to lead Israel into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land of Canaan, and to give it to them forever, for they should be His chosen people.

The people all solemnly promised to obey the laws of God. The young men of the people offered

sacrifices to God, and Moses sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice over the people, as a sign that they had made a covenant with God,—that is, a promise—that they would keep His law.

God said to Moses,

“Come up on the mount, and I will give thee tablets of stone, with the Law written upon them, that thou mayest be able to teach these laws to the people.”

Moses told Aaron and Hur to be judges of the people until he returned, and he went up the Mount. And God’s glory covered the Mount like a raging fire, but Moses went up and entered into the cloud, and disappeared. And he stayed there forty days and forty nights.

QUESTIONS

1. Where were these laws given to the people of Israel?
2. Who brought them down from God?
3. What are the Ten Commandments?
4. Why did Moses go up on the Mount? How long did he stay there?

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

THE GOLDEN CALF

Long the people of Israel waited for Moses to come down from the Mount of Sinai.

Many of them lost patience; they cried out to Moses' brother Aaron, saying,

"We do not know what has become of Moses, who brought us out of Egypt. Make us a god who will lead us."

Aaron saw that they were set on the idea of having an idol made for them. They had lived so long in Egypt, where people worshipped images of gold and stone and clay and called them gods, that they thought it was possible to make an image which would continue the great work of Moses. And since Moses had gone away, they began to fear that they would not have any more commands and messages from the One God.

Aaron did not know how to answer them in a way that would make them see how silly and wicked their idea was. So he told them to bring all their golden rings and golden ornaments, and he would make them an image. He hoped they would not give up their gold for this purpose.

But they were so eager for this silly idol to be made, that they even brought their golden rings.

Aaron took the gold and melted it in a hot fire, and shaped out of it a golden calf. The people rejoiced and said, "Here is a god who will help us," and they sacrificed to it and prayed to it.

But the Lord God knew what they were doing, and He was very angry. He said to Moses,

"Go down, for your people whom you led out of Egypt have sinned grievously. They have disobeyed Me, and they are worshipping a golden calf for their god. Now I will destroy them all, and I will make your own children and grandchildren My people, instead of them."

Moses was very sorry when he heard God's words, for he loved the people in spite of all their sins. So he prayed, and said,

"Lord God, why art Thou angry with Thy people whom Thou hast saved by Thy wonders? If Thou dost destroy them, the Egyptians will mock, and say that Thou didst bring them out of bondage to kill them. Remember Thy promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom Thou didst say that Thou wouldst multiply their seed as the stars of heaven, and wouldst bring them into the land of Canaan."

You see, Moses did not care for his own glory

compared to the glory of the people whom he had led. And God heard his prayer, and was merciful, and promised that He would not destroy them.

So Moses went down the mount, carrying the stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments were engraved; he met his friend Joshua who was waiting for him, and they went on together. But when he heard with his own ears the sound of the people of Israel singing praises to their idol, and saw with his own eyes how they were dancing about the altar-fires before the image of a golden calf, his anger was terrible!

What was the use of giving these people the marvelous Laws of God if they still wanted to worship idols?

In fury and despair, Moses raised the stone tablets high above his head and dashed them down on the rocks, where they broke into a thousand pieces. Striding forward among the frightened people, who became still at his approach, he seized the calf, threw it into the fire, burnt it, had it ground into a golden powder, and then he sprinkled the powder in water and made the people drink it up!

He was sure that not all of the people wanted this idol to be made. He decided to find out who the bad ones were, and to get rid of them so that

they would not make the rest of the people as bad as they were themselves.

He stood in the gate of the camp.

“Whoever is on the Lord’s side, let him come to me!” he cried out.

At once the tribe of Levi came to him, and many others too. Then he knew that the rest of the people were wicked and foolish idolaters, and did not deserve to be saved, so he caused them to be slain.

Then Moses went and prayed that God would forgive the Hebrews, and if they were to be punished, Moses offered to take their punishment upon himself. But the Lord would not forgive them entirely; He decreed that an angel should lead them from now on, instead of being led by God Himself. When Moses told the people this, they wept and mourned, and took off all their ornaments and jewels to show how sorry they felt.

And now God commanded Moses to go up again to the Mountain of Sinai and to bring new tablets of stone, to write the laws again. But Moses prayed, and begged God to forgive the people, and said,

“How shall we be different from other peoples, if Thou wilt not lead us Thyself to the promised land?”

And now God forgave them, and promised Moses that He would go with them in a cloud by day and a fire by night.

Moses, rejoicing, came down from the Mount. In his hands he held the new stone tablets, where the Law of God was engraved. He did not know that his face was shining with a glorious light! For he had been speaking with God. And when the people saw his face, they were afraid to come near to that light, and he had to put a veil over his eyes, because of the glory.

So the people were not afraid any more to come near, and their reverence for him was very great, and When he came to walk to the Tent where God was worshipped, they all stood up and looked at him as he walked, until he had entered the tent.

And now the people received the stone tablets of the Law, and promised faithfully to obey them.

QUESTIONS

1. What did the foolish people do while they were waiting?
2. What did God tell Moses He would do now?
3. How did Moses feel when he saw the people worshipping the golden calf?
4. What did he do?
5. How did he get rid of the wicked and foolish idolaters?
6. Did Moses bring new tablets of stone with the Law engraved on it?

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

THE HOLY ARK

Do you know why it is necessary to have laws, and why they must be obeyed, if they are good laws?

It is because all good laws help to make it easier and happier for human beings to live in this world. Bad persons are not allowed to hurt others, and good people are shown in what ways they must help others. When there are good laws, and when people obey them, then everyone can be happy.

The children of Israel understood this, and they were very glad and thankful to have the Law of God to show them what to do. And now they thought, "Where shall we keep these precious and sacred tablets of stone?"

Moses told them that it was God's will that they should build Him a holy Tent, or Tabernacle, and He had told Moses how it should be built and decorated and what should be put inside it. It had to be built like a tent, because the people were still traveling and it would have to be carried about with them.

Moses told the people that they must build the Tabernacle very carefully; they must weave their finest linen for it, and if they wanted to make

it very beautiful they should bring gold, and silver, and brass, and jewels, and oils, and fine linen, and purple dyes, as an offering to God. And his heart rejoiced when he saw how willingly and gladly they all brought him their treasures and begged him to use them for the Tabernacle of God. They brought so much that he had to give back a lot of it. All wanted to be allowed to work and help make the Tabernacle.

They took the wood of the acacia tree, which is beautiful and has a sweet smell, and they built the Ark. They covered it all over with gold, and made a great crown of gold upon it. They made a golden mercy-seat with little gold angels spreading out their wings over it. Candlesticks and service-dishes of gold were put in, and a table of acacia-wood, also covered with gold.

The tent was covered with curtains of sealskin and goats'-hair and ram's skins dyed red; within it, ten curtains of blue and purple and scarlet were hung, and clasped with gold; in the centre of the beautiful tent a veil was hung, and behind it was the Holy Ark. Within the ark were placed the stone tablets of the Law, and this place was called the Holy of Holies.

A large altar of wood was then made, and it was covered with brass, and its dishes were made

of brass. In front of the tent, at its door, a beautiful embroidered screen of the same colors as the curtains, was put up. A lamp of pure olive oil was kept burning always, never to be put out either by day or by night. All this was according to God's commands.

The people were all very happy while they were working to build and decorate the Ark. They spun linen thread and wove it into the finest cloth they had ever had; they carved the wood carefully and beautifully; they engraved the gold and the jewels and all tried their best to make everything they did quite perfect. And day after day they kept bringing more and more treasures for the Tabernacle, until Moses had to order them not to bring any more, for they already had brought more than could be used.

The great artist, Bezalel, taught them how to make everything as lovely and perfect as possible. And now they made a splendid breast-plate of gold for Aaron, who was the High Priest. They put into this breast-plate, according to God's command, twelve splendid jewels, each of a different color, and each one had the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel carved upon it; they were set in this breast-plate as a sign that now the Hebrews were all united in one people.

When the Tabernacle was finished, the people were filled with joy and pride, for now they felt that God was truly with them. On the first day of the first month they set up the Tabernacle, and all sang praises to God and prayed to him.

All looked with the greatest reverence at the curtain in the Tabernacle, for behind that curtain was the Ark, all covered with gold, and in the Ark were the holy Tablets of the Law.

Into the Holy of Holies no one but Aaron, the High Priest, was ever allowed to come. Even he could only come in once a year, on the Day of Atonement, unless God specially commanded him.

So nobody dared to come close to the curtain, but all stayed near the front part of the great tent, and watched Aaron sacrifice the burnt offering and the meal offering on the altar; and the Levites played and sang the praises of God. And Aaron stretched out his hands and blessed them all with a beautiful blessing which is still a part of the service in our synagogues to this day.

Where is the Tabernacle today? Why don't we worship in the Tabernacle nowadays?

The synagogues to which we go on Sabbath and holydays take the place of the Tabernacle. We cannot build them as beautiful and wonderful as the first holy Tent, but that does not matter.

Wherever there is a heart that truly loves God, that place is as beautiful as the Tabernacle, even if it is only a plain little wooden room. But even the most magnificent building is not a real place of prayer if the people in it are not thinking of God.

After Aaron had blessed the Hebrews, they waited for a sign from God that He was pleased with them. The sign came. The cloud of the Lord came down and covered the Tabernacle, and His glory filled it, so that not even Moses could bear to come close.

When the cloud had lifted and the glory of God had departed, the people lifted the holy tent on their shoulders and carried it with them on their journeyings, and the presence of God went with them, as he had promised Moses. When the cloud came down on the tent the people took it as a sign to rest, but when it was lifted they traveled on. It was a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, and it was always with them.

So the people of Israel came nearer and nearer to the Promised Land.

QUESTIONS

1. What did the Hebrews build now?
2. Why is it so important to have good laws and to obey them?
3. What was the Holy of Holies?
4. What takes the place of the Holy Tabernacle today?

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

Don't you think the children of Israel began now to wonder what the land of Canaan, to which they were coming nearer and nearer, was really like?

Now God commanded Moses to send twelve men, all of them chiefs of tribes, to go ahead of the rest and visit Canaan, and see what kind of place it was, and what sort of people were living there.

One of the men chosen to go was Moses' minister, Joshua, a young man who was very brave and very wise; another of them was called Caleb.

Secretly they entered the land of Canaan and for a long time they travelled through its fields and mountains and valleys.

It was a very beautiful country. Its broad valleys were full of yellow corn, and many herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were feeding in the sunlight on its green fields and mountain-sides.

The men saw rivers flowing through shady meadows, full of fruit trees and lovely flowers. Far off was the white mountain of Hermon, and hills that looked faint purple and pale gold in the distance.

On the nearer hills were long stretches of the dark green olive-trees, and many terraces of grape-vines. When they reached these vines they broke off a branch to bring back and show to the children of Israel. This branch had only one cluster of grapes on it, but that cluster was so large and heavy that two men were needed to carry it.

The land looked twice as lovely to these men who had been living so long in the hot, sandy, dry wilderness. They thought how glad the people of Israel would be to come there. But then they looked about them and noticed the people who were already living in the cities of Canaan. They were tall and strong, and their cities had high, thick walls. How could the wandering tribes of Israel ever conquer such a strong people? All except Joshua and Caleb thought it would be hopeless.

They returned to Moses and the Hebrews very downcast; the wilderness looked very dusty and stony and dry in comparison to the land they had just left.

Standing before Moses and Aaron and the hosts of the Hebrews, they said,

“Yes, the land of Canaan is a land flowing with milk and honey; it is very beautiful to see, and fruits and grain and flowers grow there in plenty. But the people living there are too many and too



THE SPIES WITH THE GRAPES

strong for us. We shall not be able to conquer them in their fortified cities."

This frightened and worried the people, and Caleb was angry with the other men for saying such a cowardly thing.

"Let us go at once and fight for this beautiful land!" he cried. "God is with us. We shall surely conquer them."

"No, no!" exclaimed the others, "we cannot conquer it. If we try to we shall all be killed."

You see, the people of Israel had been slaves for so long that they had forgotten how to fight. In their fear they did not think of God's promise that He would be with them and He would save them and make them victorious. They began to weep and shout, and they complained,

"Why did God bring us here to be killed by the Canaanites? It would be better if we went back to Egypt before all our children are killed."

"But God is with us!" cried Joshua. "We shall surely conquer. What can we do except fight? Shall we stay in the desert forever? Or shall we go back and tell Pharaoh we will make bricks for him forever? Are you good only to make bricks and build cities for another race? You must struggle and fight if you want to become a real nation!"

But the people, instead of being proud of Jos-

hua for his bravery, became angry and wanted to stone him. Among themselves they whispered,

“Let us choose another leader—someone who will take us back to Egypt!”

QUESTIONS

1. How did the people find out what the land of Canaan was like?
2. Who had taken possession of the land while the Hebrews were enslaved?
3. How could they hope to get it back?
4. Did the people feel brave enough to fight?
5. Who tried to give them courage? Did they listen to Joshua?

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

REBELLION

See how cowardly the Hebrews had become! Was it not shameful that they even imagined that they would rather be slaves than risk their lives for freedom! After God had showed them so many miracles, and after Moses had brought down the Law, and led them out of the land where they were beaten and made to work all day for nothing!

No wonder that God was very angry indeed. He said to Moses,

“These people will never trust Me and believe in Me as they ought to do. I will destroy them, and I will make your children My chosen ones.”

But Moses could not bear the thought of his people being destroyed. He had worked for them, and led them, and judged them, and like a father he loved them in spite of their faults.

He prayed that God would forgive them. So they were not destroyed, but God warned Moses that they would not be allowed to enter the land of Canaan. Moses understood that these people who had once been slaves would never have

the courage to fight. But their children, who had been born in the desert and who had always been free, they would grow up brave and willing to win themselves a homeland. When God decreed that the Hebrews must wander forty years in the wilderness until all these who had been in Egypt were dead, and their children would be grown up, Moses knew that God was just and righteous in this as in everything.

But when he told the people of God's judgment, they were wild with grief! Forty years of wandering and then never to see the promised land! They did not realize that it was not a punishment, but only a wise protection, which made God decree this. They were so unhappy that they could not listen to reason; they said they would go at once and fight the Canaanites.

"Do not go," said Moses. "You will be conquered, for God is not with you." He knew that they were not brave enough nor strong enough to fight, but their children some day would be healthy enough in body and free enough in spirit to conquer any other people.

But the excited people would not listen to him. They were so afraid of having to spend all their lives in the wilderness. Poor things! They at once went up the mountains to Canaan, just a mass of

people, not even forming themselves into a proper army, and without taking the Holy Tabernacle.

What happened? Why, of course when the Canaanites and Amalekites came out and saw them, their army came and fought the Hebrews at Hormah and slaughtered them by thousands, and drove the rest of them to the mountain.

And the forty years of wandering began.

QUESTIONS

1. Were these people worthy to enter the land of Canaan?
2. Would their children be worthy?
3. How did they feel when God judged that they must stay forty years in the wilderness?
4. Did they try then to fight?
5. Why could they not conquer at that time?

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

WANDERING IN THE WILDERNESS

A very hard time now began for the children of Israel. For now they did not even have hope that they would see the land of rest. They walked along the stony ways through the waterless deserts, and climbed narrow mountain paths beside deep precipices, and their hearts were sad.

It was a very hard time for Moses, too, for he loved the people and he suffered with them. Also the people became impatient, and often they were irritable and quarrelsome.

They were lucky in some ways, but perhaps they did not appreciate it very much. They did not have to hunt for food, for God sent them manna every night. They would gather it in the morning, and grind it between heavy stones or beat it up in mortars; then they boiled it in pots and made cakes of it, and it had a pleasant fresh taste, and they liked it.

Of course they got tired of it after a while. They should have remembered that they were lucky to get anything at all, instead of having to dig for roots and herbs all day long. But they began to complain and to grumble.

“We are sick of manna!” they told Moses—as if it was his fault! “When we were in Egypt,” they said, “we had fish, and meat, and melons,

and vegetables. Now we have nothing but manna." And they wept.

Moses did not know what to do with them. He might have answered them, "Yes, and you also had whippings, and cruel masters, and hard labor in the broiling sun." But he was patient and kind and did not want to say that. Instead, he prayed to God for them, and complained, saying,

"What shall I do with these people?"

Then God was angry with the Hebrews, and He decreed,

"They shall have meat, and nothing but meat, not for one day, nor for ten days, but for a whole month." This was a little punishment for wishing themselves back in slavery just for the sake of the Egyptian fleshpots.

Then a great wind came blowing from the sea. It blew huge numbers of small birds, called quails, over the wilderness. The people of Israel caught them by the thousands, and for a whole month they lived on the flesh of the quails, and during this month no manna fell.

Of course they got sick of the meat, and began to long for manna once more. Too much meat made them feel sick, but the manna always refreshed and strengthened them. When the month was over, the quails disappeared. The manna came

back, and now the people were very thankful for it, and did not complain about it any more.

Still they felt sulky and miserable, and as they did not have any one else to blame, they put the blame on Moses. They did not really mean to blame him; they knew in their hearts what a great thing he had done for them, and they really loved and revered him. But when people are unhappy they will often blame the one they ought to thank. Besides, they could see that Moses was going through exactly the same troubles as they were. He had nothing but manna, and he thirsted when there was no water, just like the rest of them. But he forgave them their complaints, for he understood them. He went on judging them and leading them and being kind to them.

Now there were four men among the chiefs of Israel who helped Moses to govern, who were called Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On. These chiefs were jealous of Moses, and did not trust in his wisdom. They went about among the people telling them they were fools to go on obeying the man who had brought them into so much trouble. They persuaded two hundred and fifty more chiefs to join them in a rebellion against Moses!

They gathered together and came before Moses and Aaron.

“Why do you set yourself up above us?” they asked. “We are *all* holy unto God.”

Anyone less great and noble than Moses might have answered, “Did *you* go before Pharaoh when we were all slaves? Did *you* bring down the Law from the Mount? Did *you* lead the people through all these years of suffering? or did I and my brother Aaron do these things?”

But instead he answered,

“God will show you a sign, in the morning, and you shall see whom He desires to lead His people. Take your censers and tomorrow offer them up before God. He will show you a sign.”

Dathan and Abiram made a rude answer, and stirred up the people not to obey Moses; the ones who agreed with the rebels fought the ones who were faithful to Moses, and there was quarreling and fighting all night.

God was so angry with the people for the rebellion that again He would have destroyed them if Moses had not prayed. So God promised to destroy only the rebel chiefs, and not the people.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did the people complain about the manna?
2. What did God send them instead?
3. Who were the men who rebelled?
4. What did Moses tell them to do?

CHAPTER FORTY

THE WATER OF STRIFE

Morning dawned. The two hundred and fifty rebels came with their censers and stood before the Tabernacle to offer up incense to God. Moses now spoke to the people and told them to stand far away from the rebels, for they were wicked men, who thought only of making themselves more powerful instead of doing God's will.

Now the people felt ashamed, as they ought to; they went away from the rebels and stood far off. No sooner had they gone, than a miracle happened! Under the very feet of the bad chiefs the earth opened up, and in a moment they were all swallowed up and buried in the ground!

Crying out with fear, the people began to run, thinking the same thing would happen to them, but Moses called them back, and comforted them and told them they were safe.

In their shame, they begged Moses to preserve them from God's anger. They were sorry for losing trust in Moses who had loved them and suffered for them, and they promised to obey him in the future.

So they traveled on. But when they came to the wilderness of Zin, and began to get thirsty, and there was no water, they forgot as usual all that they had promised Moses, and they began to complain and to blame him again, as if it were his fault that there was no water.

He begged them to be patient and trust in God Who would surely help them.

No, they went on weeping and grumbling.

In disgust, Moses went away from them and came to the Tabernacle, and he bowed down and prayed to God to help them. And God said,

“Take your rod and call the people together, and speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will give forth water, and then the people will see the miracle and they will believe in My power to save them.”

Angry and impatient with the behavior of the people, Moses called them together in front of the rock. Bitterly he exclaimed,

“Hear now, ye rebels! Shall I bring you forth water out of this rock?” And he struck the rock twice with the rod, instead of speaking to it.

At once, sparkling streams of water flowed out of the rock! The people cried out for joy, and began to dip it up in their hands, to drink it and to give some to their children.

But now God was angry with Moses. Although he had often pleaded with God to save them, he now called them rebels and acted as if they were not worth saving. And when he struck the rock instead of speaking to it, it made the people think that the water came out as a result of striking the rock, but if he had only spoken to it, they would have seen that it was a miracle performed by God and their faith in His power would have been renewed.

And God said to Moses,

“You shall not be the one to bring the people of Israel across the Jordan to the promised land. Joshua shall bring them.”

Moses, always so ready to plead for others, would not plead for himself. He meekly accepted God's will, and went on doing his work. And the place was called Meribah, which means “strife.”

QUESTIONS

1. What happened to the rebel chiefs?
2. Did the people complain again when they could not find water?
3. What did God tell Moses to do?
4. Did Moses do exactly as he was told?
5. What did God then tell Moses?

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

NEARER AND NEARER

Slowly the forty years of wandering came nearer to their end.

The older people who had been slaves died, and their children, who had been babies or who were not born at the time of the deliverance from Egypt, were now strong, brave, hopeful men and women, trusting in God. Moses had grown old, and his beard was long and white, but his keen eyes still flashed brightly, and his deep voice rang like a bell.

They came to the land of Edom, which is on the borders of Canaan. Moses thought it would be a good thing if the king of Edom would let the people of Israel pass through his land, for it was a near way to Canaan. So he sent messengers to the king, saying:

“Thy brother Israel (for the Edomites were descended from Esau)—“prayeth that thou wilt let us pass through thy land. We will not walk in the cornfields nor through the vineyards, but we will go along the king’s highway. If we drink thy water, we will pay for it.”

The king of Edom was a savage, rude man. He would not let Israel pass through. Moses would not fight the Edomites, because they were related to the Hebrews, so he made the people turn aside and take the long road to the south. But they were not discouraged, for they trusted in God.

God was with them. He helped them in all that they did. They fought the king of Arah, who came against them with a great army, and they conquered the army at Hormah. You remember that name! it was the place where the impatient Israelites were conquered, many years before, by the Amalekites and Canaanites. For at that time they were not ready to fight, and they were disobeying Moses by going up to battle. But now the time was ripe.

Then they came to the land of the Amorites. This king also refused to let them pass. So there was a great battle in the wilderness between the Israelites and the Amorites, and the Hebrews conquered, and passed on still further into the land of Canaan. Then they came to Bashan, and they conquered the army of Bashan also.

They were coming nearer and nearer to the river Jordan, beyond which lay the promised land. How thrilled, how happy they were! Already the country was becoming more grassy and pleasant, there

was less sand and stones, and more streams and trees and wells and date palms and cocoa-nut palms. So they went on their way, singing and hopeful.

When they came to the fertile land of Jazer, whose wonderfully rich meadows and many wells made the land perfect for cattle-herding, the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh wanted to stay there instead of crossing the Jordan. This was because they owned very large flocks and herds, and they did not think they would find any better land across the river.

Moses explained to them that it would not be fair if they were to settle down here, when the people were soon going to need as many fighters as possible. But these tribes were not cowards or traitors. They answered that of course their men-folk would come with the rest of the people and fight with them; they only wanted to build houses and leave their wives and children and cattle here in Jazer. They promised that they would not go back to their families in Jazer until the rest of the people were safely across the river. So then Moses gave them permission to do as they wished. They kept their promise; as soon as they had made dwelling-places for their families they came back to Moses and went on with the rest of the people.

Wherever the Hebrews came and conquered, the first thing they did was to destroy the idols and burn all the false images of gods, and make the land sacred to the one God of All.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Moses want to lead the people through Edom?
2. Did Edom let them go through? Why did Moses not fight Edom?
3. Whom did the children of Israel fight at Hormah? Did they win?
4. What two tribes did the Hebrews conquer next?
5. Did the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh behave rightly?
6. What did the Hebrews do first whenever they conquered a place?

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

BALAAM AND THE ASS

You can imagine that the kings of the country began to be very much afraid of this strong, great people who were coming and fighting and conquering. The king of Moab, whose name was Balak, decided to do something about it. He called together some of his chiefs, and ordered them to take a lot of gold and silver and go to a famous prophet called Balaam, and ask him to come back with them and curse the people of Israel. For in those days the heathens believed that if a prophet like Balaam cursed them, they would be cursed, and if he blessed them, they would be blessed.

But Balaam knew of the people of Israel, and he knew of God, and he did not believe that God would let him curse His people. So he refused to come.

The king of Moab insisted that he must come. So at last Balaam said that he would come, but the king must understand that he would say exactly what God commanded him to say, no more and no less.

So Balaam saddled his ass and rode toward

Moab. He sent the angel of God with a sword of fire in his hand to kill Balaam. Balaam rode along, not seeing the angel. But the ass saw the angel, and it turned aside, out of the angel's path, and thus saved Balaam.

Balaam was cross with the poor ass for turning aside, and he hit it with his stick. Three times the angel placed himself in the way, ready to destroy Balaam; three times the ass turned aside, and three times the prophet hit it. Then God gave the poor ass power to speak.

"Why do you strike me?" it said. "Have I not served you well all your life?"

In amazement, Balaam looked up. And now the angel was visible to him, and the sword of fire that he had in his hand. And Balaam, getting down from his ass, bowed to the earth before the angel.

"If your ass had not turned away, surely I would have slain thee," the angel said. "But now go on to Moab, but say only the words that I shall tell thee."

Balaam promised to obey, and he rode on and came to Moab.

The king was delighted to see him. He came out of the city to meet him, and promised him the greatest rewards and the highest honors if he would curse Israel. Balaam warned him again,

"I will say only what God commands me to say."

Now Balak took Balaam up to the top of a high hill, from which he could see the multitudes of Hebrews and their tents in the valleys below. Balaam built several altars, and offered up on each altar a bullock and a ram. And the voice of God came to him and told him what to say. So Balaam began to speak out very loud, so that all could hear him, and he said,

"How shall I curse those whom God hath not cursed?

"Who can count the dust of Jacob,

"Or number the fourth part of Israel?

"Let my end be as that of Israel!"

Angrily King Balak cried out,

"What hast thou done to me! I brought thee to curse my enemies, and thou hast blessed them!"

"I told you I would say only what God commanded me," replied Balaam.

So the king took him to another hilltop, from which he could see only a few of the Hebrews in the plains below. They built seven altars and offered up on each altar a bullock and a ram. And Balak said,

"What does God tell thee now?"

"Behold," said Balaam, "I have received commandment to bless

“God is with Israel.

“He hath the strength of the wild ox.

“He shall conquer all his enemies.”

Balak, furious, exclaimed, “Neither bless them at all nor curse them at all!” But Balaam made him go up on another hilltop, and make seven more offerings on seven altars.

And Balaam went on prophesying, and he blessed the children of Israel, and promised that they should be the greatest of nations and possess the land of their enemies. Balak was very angry, and he drove the prophet away, but he could not make him stop blessing Israel.

So Balak went back ashamed and frightened to his kingdom, but the Hebrews rejoiced. Their hearts were glad and hopeful, and they sang praises to God.

QUESTIONS

1. What did King Balak decide to do to the Israelites?
2. Did Balaam want to curse the Hebrews?
3. Whom did the ass of Balaam see? What miracle happened to the ass?
4. Did Balaam curse the Hebrews?
5. Did King Balak get what he wanted?

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

THE PASSING OF MOSES

Moses was weary. For many years he had labored and struggled and suffered, and had wandered with his people. Sometimes he felt a longing to be at rest with God. The Hebrews were now a great multitude, young and strong and full of power and hope. They were very near to the fulfilment of God's promise to them. Moses felt that his duty was nearly finished.

One day the voice of God came to Moses, saying,

"Get thee up to the top of the mountain of Abarim, and look out over the land that I have given to the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou shalt be gathered unto thy fathers."

Then Moses understood that he was soon to die. But what of the people?

"Oh God," he prayed, "do not leave the children of Israel without a leader, like a flock without a shepherd. Appoint a man to rule over them when I am gone."

And God answered him, and said,

"Take Joshua, the son of Nun; he is a righteous and holy man. Bring him before the High Priest, in the presence of all the people, and appoint him

to rule the people after you. All the people shall obey him and honor him, and he shall bring them across the Jordan."

Moses' heart was longing to go across the Jordan himself and to lead the people himself into the promised land of which they had dreamed so many years. But he was meek and humble, and he obeyed God's word without reply.

He went down from the hill, and caused the trumpets to be blown. The people all came out of their tents and met together in a broad plain in front of the mountain. The chiefs and ministers of the people stood together.

Moses called Joshua out from among the chiefs. He brought him to Eliezer, son of Aaron, who was now High Priest, for Aaron had died. And he put a splendid robe of fine linen upon Joshua, and rings on his fingers, and gold on his hair, and all the people looked at each other in wonder, eager to find out the reason for this honor.

Then Moses spoke to the children of Israel. He told them that he was going to die, and that Joshua would now rule over them and lead them. At first the Hebrews were silent, shocked at the thought that their beloved Moses was going to leave them. But when they saw that it was really true, they burst into bitter tears and wailed loudly. Now they

remembered how Moses had loved them and had suffered with them, how he had left a palace and given up his princely rank in order to free them from slavery and make them a nation. They wept to remember how much trouble their parents had caused him, and they wondered who else could lead them as well and judge them as righteously and wisely.

Moses comforted them; he told them that God would always help them if only they obeyed him and remembered His law. Then he walked a little way up the mountain, and spoke to them, and they listened in perfect silence.

He reminded them of everything that had happened since they were delivered from Egypt,—their long wanderings, their sufferings in the wilderness, their final victories. Solemnly he repeated to them the laws which God had given, and warned them always to remember and obey, for if they did not obey, they would lose their strength and they would be scattered all over the earth; they would lose the land for which they had struggled so bitterly, and would become a people of strangers wherever they went.

“Therefore you shall love your God and fear him, and keep His commandments, and serve Him with all your heart and all your soul.”

And Moses and the priests spoke to the people, saying,

“Keep silence and listen, oh Israel, for this day you have become the chosen people of God.”

Moses stretched out his hands over his people and blessed them for the last time, and all the thousands of Hebrew men and women and children bowed their heads and wept. Then he turned, and gathering up his flowing white garments, he walked slowly, slowly up and up, into the mountain of Nebo. The people raised their eyes and looked silently after him, as long as they could see even the faintest speck of his white garb.

When Moses reached the top of the hill, he looked down over the land on the other side, the land of Canaan, the promised land. And he saw the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, and the sparkling Jordan flowing steadily through green meadows. He saw the blossoming fruit-trees, the vine heavy with the coming grapes, the fields of growing corn. The sweet fragrance of apple-blossom and orange-blossom, the warm scent of roses and the smell of the cornfields, came blowing up to him, and he felt the keen, salty breeze from the sea upon his face. Moses looked for a long time, and it seemed to him that he looked

upon the most beautiful and delightful land on earth.

And the voice of God came to him, saying,

“This is the land of which I swore unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying I will give it to thy seed.”

So Moses' heart was glad, and he walked slowly down the other side of the mountain. And the people saw him no more, for God took him.

Long the children of Israel searched for his burial-place upon the mountain of Nebo, but they never found it. For it was God who had buried Moses, because God loved him so much. The people mourned and wept for Moses, for they knew there would never again be a prophet and a leader so wise, so just, so kind.

But Joshua was a clever and righteous man, and a brave soldier. They obeyed him, as Moses had commanded them to do. And they prepared to cross the Jordan into the land of promise.

QUESTIONS

1. Did Moses think that his task was done now?
2. Whom did God choose to take Moses' place?
3. How did the people feel when they knew that Moses was going to leave them?
4. Where did Moses go now? What did he see from the mountain-top?
5. What did God promise Moses?
6. Was Moses ever seen again? Why not?





